A Quarterly of New Literature

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STANLEY ELKIN: Among the Witnesses

JOSEPH E. BAKER: Pater and Proust

P. H. LOWREY: Fear No More the Heat of the Sun

GEORGE SCOUFFAS: Kazantzakis:
Odysseus and the 'Cage of Freedom'

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ACCENT
A QUARTERLY OF NEW LITERATURE
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STANLEY ELKIN:

Among the Witnesses

The hotel breakfast bell had not awakened him. The hotel Social Director had. The man had a gift. Wherever he went buzzers buzzed, bells rang, whistles blew. He was a one-man fire drill, Feldman thought.

Feldman focused his eyes on the silver whistle dangling from the neck of the man leaning over him, a gleaming, tooting symbol of authority suspended from a well-made, did-it-himself, plastic lanyard.

"Camp Cuyhoga?" Feldman asked him.

"What's that?" the man said.

"Did you go to Camp Cuyhoga? Your lanyard looks like Cuyhoga '41. Our colors too. Purple and Green against a field of white plastic."

"Come on, boy, wake up a minute," the man said.

"I'm awake. I'm awake."

"Well," he began, "you probably think it's funny, the Social Director coming into the room of a guest like this."

"To hell with caste, man. We're all Americans here," Feldman said.

"But the fact is," he went on, "I wanted to talk to you about something. Now first of all I want you to understand that Bieberman doesn't know I'm here. He didn't put me up to a thing. As a matter of fact he'd probably fire me if he knew what I was going to say,

but, well, Jesus, Steve, this is a family hotel, you know what I mean?" Feldman heard him say, "well, Jesus, Steve," like a tee-shirted YMCA professional conscious and sparing of his oaths. He was Arts and Crafty, this one. "That thing yesterday, well, to be frank, a thing like that could murder a small hotel like this. In a big place, some place like Grossinger's, it wouldn't mean a thing. It would be swallowed up in a minute, am I right? Now you might say this is none of my business, but Bieberman has been good to me and I don't want to see him get hurt. He took me off club dates in Jersey to bring me up here. I mean I ain't knocking my trade but let's face it, a guy could get old and never get no higher in the show business than the Hudson Theater. He caught me once and liked my material, said if I come up with him maybe I could work up some of the better stuff into a musical like. He's been true to his word. Free rein. Carte blanche. Absolutely blanche, Steve. Well, you know yourself, you've heard some of the patter songs. It's good stuff, am I telling a lie? You don't expect to hear that kind of stuff in the mountains. Sure, it's dirty, but it's clever, am I right? That crazy Estelle can't sing, she's got no class, we both know that, but the material's there, right? It's there."

People were always recruiting him, Feldman thought. "So?" he asked carefully.

"Well," the Social Director said, embarrassed, "I'll get out of here and let you get dressd. But I just wanted to say, you know, how I feel about this guy, and warn you that there might be some talk. Mrs. Frankel and that crowd. If you hear anything squash it, you know what I mean? Explain to them." He turned and went toward the door.

Feldman started to ask, "Explain what?" but it was too late. The Social Director had already gone out. He could hear him in the hall knocking at the room next to his own. He heard a rustling and a moment later someone padding toward the door. He listened to the clumsy rattle of knobs and hinges, the inward sigh of wood as the door swung open, and the introductory murmurs of the Social Director, hesitant, explanatory, apologetic. Trying to make out the words, he heard the Social Director's voice shift, take on a loud assurance, and finally subdue itself into a tone of cheap conspiracy. "Between us," he would be saying now, winking slyly, perhaps even touching with his finger his listener's chest.

Feldman leaned back against his pillow, forgetting the Social

Director. In a few minutes he heard the long loud ring of the second breakfast bell. It was Bieberman's final warning and there was in it the urgency of a fire alarm. He had once told Norma that if the hotel were to catch fire and they sounded that alarm, the guests would go by conditioned response into the dining hall to nibble sandwiches and wait for the fire engines. Well, he would not be with them at any rate. Stephen Feldman, he thought, hotel holdout. They moved and played and ate in a ferocious togetherness, eyeing with suspicion and real fear those who stood back, who apologized and excused themselves. They even went to town to the movies in groups of a dozen. He had seen them stuff themselves into each other's station wagons, and in the theater had looked on as they passed to each other down the wide row of seats candy bars, bags of peanuts, sticks of gum. With Norma he had watched them afterwards in the ice cream parlor, like guests of honor at a wedding banquet, at the tables they had made the waiter push together. If they could have worked it out they would all have made love in the same big bed, sighing between climaxes, "Isn't this nice? Everybody, isn't this nice?"

He decided to ignore the bell's warning and forfeit breakfast, enjoying the small extravagance. But he was conscious of another feeling, vaguely familiar, and he wondered about its source. Perhaps that was really why he made no effort to get up—he was afraid of dissipating it. It was a feeling of deep, real pleasure, like waking up and not having to go to the bathroom, and he had had it for several mornings now. He had at first regarded it suspiciously, like some suddenly recurring symptom from an old illness. But then he was able to place it. It was a sensation from childhood. It was the way boys woke, instantly, completely, aware of some new fact in their lives. He was—it reduced to this—excited.

He began then his morning inventory of himself. It was a way of keeping up with his geography. He looked first for the source of his new feeling, but except for the obvious fact that he was no longer in the army and had had returned to him what others would have called his freedom, he could find nothing. But he knew that it was not simply a matter of freedom, or at any rate of that kind of freedom. It was certainly not his prospects. He had none. He was fresh out of prospects. But thinking this, he began to see a possible reason for his contentment. His plans for himself were vague, but he was young

and healthy. (At the hotel old men offered, only half-jokingly, to trade places with him.) He had only to let something happen to himself, to let something turn up. Uncommitted, he could simply drift until he came upon his fate as a lucky victim of a shipwreck might come upon a vagrant spar. It was like being once again on one of those trips he used to take to strange cities. He had never admired nature. He would bear a mountain range only if there were a city on its other side, water if eventually it became a busy port. In cities he was somehow like a cautious but interested swimmer going tentatively beyond his depth. He would strike out fearfully into the older sections, into slums, factory districts, past railroad yards, into bleak neighborhoods where the poor stared forlornly out of windows. He would enter their dingy hallways and study their names on their mailboxes. Once, as he wandered at dusk through a Skid Row, meeting the eyes of bums who gazed listlessly at him from doorways, he had felt a hand grab his arm. He turned and saw an old man, a bum, who stared at him with dangerous eyes. "Give me money," the man wheezed from a broken throat. He hesitated and saw the man's fist grope slowly, threateningly, toward him. He thought he would be hit but he stood, motionless, waiting to see what the man would do. Inches from his face, the hand opened, turned, became a palm. "Money," the old man said. "God bless you, sir. Help a poor old man. Help me. Help me." He remembered looking into the palm. It was soft, incredibly flabby, the hand, weirdly, of a rich man. The bum began to sob, to tell some story of a wasted life, of chances missed, of things lost, of mistakes made. He listened, spellbound, looking steadily into the palm which remained throughout it all just inches from his body. Finally it shook, reached still closer to him, and at last, closing on itself, dropped helplessly to the old man's side. Stephen was fascinated.

The talking in the other room had momentarily stopped. Then someone summed things up and a pleased voice agreed. It sounded as though a pact had been made. A door opened and the Social Director walked out, whistling, into the corridor.

In a little while he heard others in the corridor. Those would be the guests going to breakfast. He felt again a joy in his extravagance and smiled at the idea of trying to be extravagant at Bieberman's (he thought of the shuffleboard court and the crack in the cement that snaked like a wayward "S" past the barely legible numbers where the paint had faded, of the frayed seams on the tennis nets and the

rust on the chains that supported them, of the stucco main building that as soon as it had been built must have looked obsolete, out of place in those green, rich mountains); it was a little like trying to be extravagant at Coney Island. There was about Bieberman's an atmosphere of the second-rate that had little to do with shabbiness. Some places, he knew, even commanded high prices for their shabbiness. But here a thin film of compromise clung to everything about the hotel.

He had seen the expression on the guests' faces as they descended from the hotel station wagon. They came, traitors to their own causes, doubtful, suspicious of their chances, their hearts split by the hope for change, for some unlooked for shift of fortune. Later, they joked about it. What could you expect, they asked, from a mountain that had no Bronx or Brooklyn on top of it?

As for himself, he knew why he had come. And there was nothing mysterious about it. It had nothing to do with soul-searching, or with any of the other academic sports. He was fascinated by the debauch. Sin appealed to him as an art form. But he knew there must be opportunity, and that though the world existed on many levels you had to find your own. You couldn't simply run to the nearest orgy and ask to be let in. You might be a cop, a spy, a person who would throw up. Hometown boy, go home, he had told himself. Home, of course, was where you screwed around, where they knew you. Like the Catskills, a place, a kind of dark, wild closet where his race—none of that—his people—now cut that out—people like himself—that was better—could go.

In the army he had known a boy named Phil, a sort of amateur confidence man itching to turn pro, who, like a mystic, looked to the mountains. He remembered a conversation he had once had with him. They had been sitting in the PX one night during basic training solacing themselves with near-beer. Phil asked him what he was going to do when he got out. He had to tell him he didn't know, and Phil looked doubtful for a moment. He did not understand how something so important had not been prepared for. Stephen asked him the same question, expecting to hear something improbable, some pathetic little tale about night school, but Phil surprised him, reciting an elaborate plan he had worked out. All he needed was a Cadillac.

"A Cadillac?" Feldman said. "Where would you get the money?"

"Listen to him. What do you think, I was always in the army?"

"What did you do before?"

"What did I do? I was a bellboy. In the mountains. In the mountains a bellboy is good for fifteen, sixteen hundred a season. If he makes book like me, add another five."

"You made book?"

"Not my own. I was an agent sort of for a guy. I was a bellboy five seasons. I was saving for the car, you understand. Well, now I've got enough. I've got enough for a wardrobe too. When you have a white Caddy convertible with black upholstery and gold fittings, you don't drive it in blue jeans. I've got about a thousand bucks just for the wardrobe part. When I get out I'm going to pick up my car and I'll go back to the mountains, see? There must be a hundred hotels up there. All I've got to do is to drive around until I see some girl who looks like she might be good for a couple of bucks. I'll pick her up. I'll make a big thing of it, do you follow me? We'll drive around with the top down to all the nice hotels, Grossinger's and the Concord, where all the bellboys know me, and we'll eat a nice lunch in town, and we'll make a date to meet again. Then when I pick her up that night we'll go out to the different hotels—they've got all this free entertainment in the mountains—but the whole time I'm with her I'll be hanging back like, quiet, very sad. She's got to ask me what's up, right? Well, I'll brush it off, but all the time I'll be getting more miserable and she'll be all over me with questions about what's wrong, is it something she did, you know what I mean? So finally I'll say, 'Look, dear, I didn't want to ruin your evening, but I see I'll have to tell you. It's the Cadillac. I've got just one payment to make on it and it's ours. Well, I'm broke this month. I lent money to a guy and I dropped a couple of hundred on a nag last week. I missed the payment. They called me up today they're going to repossess if they don't get the payment tomorrow. Hell, I wouldn't care, honey, but I like you and I know what a kick it gives you to ride in it.' Now you know, a girl on a vacation, she's got to have a few bucks in the suitcase, am I right? Sooner or later she's got to say, 'Maybe I could lend you some money toward it. How much do you need?' I tell her that it's crazy, she doesn't even know me, and anyway that I'd need about sixty bucks. Well, don't you see, she's so relieved it's not more she knocks herself out to get the dough to me. She's thinking I'm into her for sixty bucks, we're practically engaged or something. The thing is, to close the deal, I've got to be able to make her. That's

my insurance she won't try to find me later on. These girls make a big thing out of their reputation and I could ruin her. It's easy. That's the whole setup. The next day I go to a new hotel. If I'm smart I figure it's good for the whole season. And then in the winter, there's Miami."

Feldman smiled, recalling Phil's passion. It was a hell of an idea, he had to admit, and he would have to keep his eyes open for a white Cadillac convertible. But what was important was that somewhere in the outrageous plan, there was sound, conservative thinking, the thinking of a man who knew his geography, who saw his symbols in the true white lights of a Cadillac's headlamps. The plan could work. It was, in its monstrous way, feasible, and he cheered Phil on. He had not come himself for the money, of course, but to shake down a little glory from the skies; to abandon himself; in short, to make love to some nice Jewish girl or girls. Only it depended upon mutual abandon, and there was not so much of that going around. And as far as that was concerned, he was hard pressed to work up any abandon of his own. All he could be sure of was that he approved of it.

"Well anyway," he thought, playing his pleasant morning game, "I'm in a new place, and there's Norma, at least."

As he thought of Norma he felt some misgivings. It was too easy to make fun of her desperation. She was, after all, something like the last of her race, the vacationing secretary, the over-ripe vestal virgin, the only girl in the whole damned family who had not walked down some flower-strewn aisle in the Bronx amidst a glory going at four dollars a plate, toward the ultimate luck, a canopy of flowers, to plight what she would call (all the time explaining who the old uncle was who hung back and did not smile in the wedding photographs) her troth. Beauty is troth and troth beauty, that is all ye know on earth and all ye need to know. And Norma, he thought, on the edge of age, having tried all the other ways, having gone alone to the dances in the gymnasium of the Hebrew School, having read and mastered the *Journal of the American Medical Association* for the month of April so that she might hold intelligent conversation with the nephew of her mother's friend, a perspiring interne at Bellevue, and having ceased to shave her underarms because of the pain, had abandoned herself to Bieberman's and to him.

He stretched in bed. Under the sheet he moved his toes and watched the lump change shape, like a suddenly shifting mountain range. The sun lay in strips across his chest. He got out of the sun-

warmed bed, and slices of light from the Venetian blinds climbed up and across his body.

He began to dress but saw that his ground level window was open. He moved up to it cautiously and started to pull the string on the Venetian blinds to slant the sunlight downward. Seeing some of the guests standing in a large group beside the empty swimming pool, he paused. He remembered the cryptic warnings of the Social Director. He shivered slightly, recalling against his will the confused and angry scene which yesterday had sickened them all. Was this the new excitement he had awakened with, he wondered.

He had even known the child slightly; she and her mother had sat at the table next to his in the dining hall. He had once commented to Norma that she was a pretty little girl. Her death and her mother's screams (the cupped hands rocking back and forth in front of her, incongruously like a gambler's shaking dice) had frightened him. He had come up from the tennis court with his racket in his hand. In front of him were the sun-blistered backs of the guests. He pushed through, using his racket to make a place for himself. He stood at the inner edge of the circle but, seeing the girl's blue face ringed by the wet yellow hair sticking to it, he backed off, thrusting his racket before his face, defending his eyes. The people pushing behind him would not let him through and helplessly he had to turn back, forced to watch as Mrs. Goldstone, the girl's mother, asked each of them why it had happened, and then begged, and then accused, and then turned silently back to the girl to bend over her again and slap her. He heard her insanely calm voice scolding the dead girl: "Wake up. Wake up. Wake up." He watched the mother, squatting on her heels over the girl, vaguely obscene, like someone defecating in the woods. She struggled hopelessly with the firemen who came to remove the girl, and after they had borne her off, her body jouncing grotesquely on the stretcher, he saw the mother try to hug the wet traces of the child's body on the cement. When the others put out their hands and arms to comfort her, crowding about her, determined to make her recognize their sympathy, he looked away.

He stood back from the window. Several of the people from yesterday were there again. "My God," he thought, "they're acting it out."

He recognized Mrs. Frankel among them. She was wearing her city clothes and looked hot and uncomfortable standing beside Bieber-

man's empty pool. She seemed to be arguing ferociously, in her excitement unconscious of the big purse that followed weirdly the angry arcs of her arms. The sun caught the faces of some stones on her heavy bracelet and threw glints of light into Stephen's eyes as she pointed in the direction of the pool. He did not know what she was saying but he could imagine it easily enough. He had heard her bullying before. She was like the spokesman for some political party forever in opposition.

In a moment Stephen noticed something else. Beyond the excited crowd gathering about Mrs. Frankel, he saw Bieberman who stood, hanging back, his head cocked to one side, his expression one of troubled concentration. He looked like a defendant forced to listen in a foreign court to witnesses whose language he could not understand. Beside him was the Social Director, scowling like an impatient advocate.

Stephen finished shutting the light from the room, and, turning from the window, began again to dress.

When he approached the main building the others had finished their breakfasts and were already in the positions that would carry them through until lunch. On the long shaded porch in front of Bieberman's main building people sat in heavy wicker rockers playing cards. They talked low in wet thick voices. Occasionally the quiet murmur was broken by someone bidding stridently. Stephen could feel already the syrupy thickness of the long summer day. He climbed the steps and was about to go inside to get some coffee when he saw Mrs. Frankel. She was talking to a woman who listened gravely. He tried to slip by without having to speak to her but she had seen him. She looked into his eyes and would not turn away. Stephen nodded to her. She allowed her head to sway forward once slowly as though she and Stephen were conspirators in some grand mystery. "Good morning, Mrs. Frankel," Stephen said.

She greeted him solemnly. "It won't be long now, will it, Mr. Feldman?"

"What won't?" Stephen asked.

She waved her hand about her, taking in all of Bieberman's in a vague gesture of accusation. "Didn't they tell you I was leaving?" she asked slowly.

He was amazed at the woman's egotism. He pictured her dispatching little notes via the bellboy. On each would be the cryptic message: "I'm leaving. F."

"Vacation over, Mrs. Frankel?" he asked, smiling.

"Some vacation," she said. "Do you think I'd stay with that murderer another day? I should say not! Listen, I could say plenty. You don't have to be a Philadelphia lawyer to see what's happening. Some vacation. Who needs it? Don't you think when my son heard he didn't say, 'Mama, I'll be up to get you whenever you want?' The man's a fine lawyer, he could make plenty of trouble if he wanted."

For a moment as the woman spoke he felt the shadow of a familiar panic. He recognized the gestures, the voice that would take him into the conspiracy, that insisted he was never out of it. Mrs. Frankel could go to hell, he thought. He could not tell her so, of course, for that would be a gesture of his own. He would not go through life using his hands.

Mrs. Frankel still spoke in the same tone of outrage which Feldman did not quite trust. "The nerve," she said. "Well, believe me, he shouldn't be allowed to get away with it."

Bieberman suddenly appeared at the window behind Mrs. Frankel's chair. His huge head seemed to fill the whole window. His face was angry but when he spoke his voice was soft. "Please, Mrs. Frankel. Please," he said placatingly. Stephen continued toward the dining room.

Inside, the bus boys were still clearing the tables. He went up to one of the boys and asked for some coffee. The boy nodded politely and went through the large brown swinging doors into the kitchen. He pushed the doors back forcefully and Stephen saw for a moment the interior of the bright kitchen. He looked hard at the old woman, Bieberman's cook, sitting on a high stool, a cigarette in her mouth, shelling peas. The doors came quickly together, but in a second their momentum had swung them outward again and he caught another glimpse of her. She had turned her head to watch the bus boy. Quickly the doors came together again, like stiff theatrical curtains.

He turned and saw Norma across the dining hall. She was holding a cigarette and drinking coffee, watching him. He went up to her table. "Good morning," he said, sitting down. "A lot of excitement around here this morning."

"Hello," she said.

Stephen leaned over to kiss her. She moved her head and he was only able to graze her cheek. In the instant of his fumbling movement he saw himself half out of his chair, leaning across the cluttered table,

like a clumsy diver on a diving board. He sat back abruptly, surprised. He shrugged. He broke open a roll and pulled the dough from its center. "Frankel's leaving today," he said after a while.

"Yes," she said. "I know."

"In a cloud of shady circumstances. I'm going to miss her. She's a kind of Catskillian Minute Man," he said, smiling.

"What's so funny about Mrs. Frankel?"

Stephen looked at her. "Nothing," he said. "You're right. One of these days, after this Linda Goldstone affair had blown over, she would have gotten around to us."

"She couldn't say anything about us."

"No," he said. "I guess not."

"Goldstone affair," she said. "The little girl is dead."

"Yes," he said. "She was a nice kid."

"Affair," she said. "Some affair."

He looked at her carefully to see whether she was teasing him. He could not understand her coolness, her primness. Her face was without expression. What did she want from him, a *statement?*

"All right," he said, "O.K. The Goldstone affair—excuse me, the Goldstone tragedy—was just the Goldstone drowning. Norma, it was an accident. Sure, unfortunate, tragic too, in a limited, personal way, but at bottom just an accident. Everyone around here carries on as though it had implications. Even you. I suppose the thing I feel worst about, outside my common and decent sympathy for the parents, is Bieberman. He's the only one who still has anything to lose. It could hurt him in the pocketbook and to a man like him that must be a mortal wound."

He stopped. Norma looked shocked, like someone who had been slapped. It was a dodge, it was a dodge, he thought. Always, fragility makes its demands on bystanders. The dago peddler whose apples have been spilled, the rolled drunk, the beat up queer, the new widow shrieking at an open window—their helplessness strident, their despair a prop. What did they want? They were like children rushing to their toys, the trucks, the tin armies, to manipulate them, put them in situations whose consequences they could not foresee, making sounds of battle in their throats, percussing danger and emergency. He would not take back what he had said. He would not make things easier for her.

Stephen Feldman was in his bathing trunks. On his feet were the low quarters he had been discharged in. He had not had time, so

anxious was he to get away, to buy other shoes, not even the sneakers appropriate for afternoon climbs like this one on the high hill behind Bieberman's.

He had lost interest in the hike. He turned his back on the sandy, rock-strewn path that continued on up the hill and into the woods he had promised himself to explore, and he looked down to see where he had come from. Below him was the resort, tricked out in artificially bright colors. He had not seen the place before from up here and its arrangement in the flat green valley struck him as comic. It looked rather like a giant Fun House in an amusement park. He had the impression that if he were to return to his room he would find, bracketed in heavy yellow frames, mirrors that gave back distorted images. In the trick rooms, constructed to defy gravity, he would have to hang onto the furniture to keep from falling. He looked at the fantastic spires that swirled like generous scoops of custard in cups too small to hold them, and he pictured Bieberman climbing at sunset to the top of these minarets to bellow like a clownish muezzin to the wayward guests. He saw the brightly colored beach umbrellas on the hotel lawn. They were like flowers grown grossly out of proportion in a garden.

He grinned, shifting his gaze from the hotel grounds and letting it fall on his own body. It rested there a moment without any real recognition and then, gradually conscious of himself, he stared, embarrassed, at his thighs which, somehow, exposure to the sun had failed to tan deeply. He traced his legs down past bony knee-caps and hairless shins and mocked in silence their abrupt disappearance into the formal shoes. Why, he was like someone come upon in the toilet. The fat thighs, the shiny pallor of the too smooth legs, like a glaucous sheen on fruit, betrayed him. He seemed to himself clumsy and a little helpless, like old, fat women in camp chairs on the beach, their feet swollen in men's shoes they had to leave untied, the loose strings like the fingers they laced protectively across their busts.

Just what was he really doing at Bieberman's, he wondered. He could dismiss his disappointment as an experience of travellers who, having left the airport in their hired cars, and spoken to clerks about reservations, and made arrangements for the delivery of bags, find themselves alone in cities strange to them, bored, vaguely depressed, sleepless in their rented beds, searching aimlessly for familiar names in the telephone directory. But what, finally, was he doing there at

all? He thought of the other people who had come to the hotel. Somehow he had to remind himself that they did not live there always, had not been hired by the hotel as a kind of folksy background, a monumental shill for his benefit. Their reasons for coming were practical. They organized their pleasures, he supposed, on a quantitative basis and had chosen Bieberman's (poring over the brochure in hot apartments) for the access it would give them to the tennis court, the pool, the six-hole golf course, the floor show "nitely," the card tables, the dining room, each other. The greatest difference was that they had come to *Bieberman's,* he merely to a place in the mountains (he remembered the hot trip on the Greyhound bus, the small village where he left the bus, the suitcases he had lifted into the taxi, and his instructions to the driver to drive through the mountains until he told him to stop). He supposed that was why there were for the others no surprises, except for the death of the little girl, and for himself—except for the death of the little girl—so many.

He wondered whether to start up the path again. He turned to estimate the distance he had yet to travel and discovered, quite unexpectedly, that he was tired. He looked again below him. He could see the drained pool. A little water still remained at the bottom, like a stain on the smooth white tile. Some reflected light flashed against his eyes and he turned, instinctively shielding them with one cupped palm.

"I didn't think you'd see me," someone said.

Stephen stepped back. He hadn't seen anyone but assumed that the boy who was now coming from within the trees that bordered the path had mistaken his gesture as a friendly wave and had responded to it.

"If you're trying to hide," Stephen said, "you shouldn't wear white duck trousers. Law of the jungle." The bare-chested boy, whom he recognized as the hotel lifeguard, came cautiously onto the path where Stephen stood. Stephen thought he seemed rather shamefaced, and looked into the green recess from which the boy had come to see if perhaps one of the girls from the hotel was there.

"I wasn't hiding," the boy said defensively. "I come up here often when I'm not on duty. I've seen you at the pool."

"I've seen you too. You're the lifeguard." The boy looked down. They were standing in a circle of sunlight that seemed to ring them like contenders for a title of little note in a woodsy arena. He noticed uncomfortably that the boy was looking at his shoes. Stephen shuffled

his feet self-consciously. The boy looked up and Stephen saw that his eyes were red.

"Have they been talking about me?" the boy asked.

"Who? Has who been talking about you?"

The boy nodded in the direction of the hotel.

"No," Stephen said. "Why?" he asked before he could check himself.

"Mr. Bieberman said I shouldn't hang around today. I didn't know anywhere to come until I remembered this place. I was going all the way to the top when I heard you. I thought Mr. Bieberman might have sent you up to look for me."

Stephen shook his head.

The boy seemed disappointed. "Look," he said suddenly, "I want to come down. I'm not used to this. How long do they expect me to stay up here?" For all the petulance, Stephen could hear real urgency in his voice. He added this to the boy's abjectness, to his guilt at being found, and to the terror he could not keep to himself. It wasn't fair to let the boy continue to reveal himself in the mistaken belief that everything had already been found out about him. He didn't want to hear more, but already the boy was talking again. There was no way to stop him. "I'm not used to this," he said. "I told Mr. Bieberman at the beginning of the summer about my age. He knew I was sixteen. That's why I only get two hundred. It was O.K. then."

"Two hundred?"

The boy stopped talking and looked Stephen over carefully. He might have been evaluating their relative strengths. As though he had discovered Stephen's weakness and was determined to seize upon it for his own advantage, he looked down at Stephen's knees. Stephen felt his gaze keenly.

"Does anyone else know?" Stephen asked abruptly.

"Mrs. Frankel, I think," he said, still not looking up.

Stephen shifted his position, moving slightly to one side. "She'll be going home today," he said. "I saw her this morning. She didn't say anything." He did not enjoy the cryptic turn in the conversation. It reminded him vaguely of the comical communication between gangsters in not very good films. A man leans against a building. Someone walks past. The man nods to a loitering confederate. The confederate winks slyly and moves on.

He made up his mind to continue the walk. "Look," he said to

the boy, "I'm going to go on up the path." Having said this, he began to move down towards Bieberman's. He realized his mistake immediately but felt that the boy must be staring at him. He wondered whether he should make some feint with his body, perhaps appear to have come down a few steps to get a better look at some non-existent activity below them and then turn to continue back up the path. "No," he thought. "I won't give him the satisfaction." He could hear the boy following him.

Some pebbles that the boy dislodged struck Stephen's ankles. He watched them roll down the hill. The boy caught up with him. "I'm going down too," he said, as though Stephen had made a decision for both of them. The path narrowed and Stephen took advantage of the fact to move ahead of the boy. He moved down quickly, concentrating on the steep angle of the descent. Just behind him the boy continued to chatter. "He needed someone for the season. It was the Fourth of July and he didn't have anyone. I got a cousin who works in the kitchen. He told me. Mr. Bieberman knew about my age. I told him. He said, 'What's age got to do with it? Nobody drowns.' I had to practice the holds in my room." The path widened and the boy came abreast of Stephen. He timed his pace to match Stephen's and they came to the bottom of the hill together.

Stephen began to jog ahead of the boy but, soon tiring, he stopped and resumed walking. Though the boy had not run after him, Stephen knew that he was not far behind and that he was still following him. He went deliberately toward one of the tables on Bieberman's lawn, thinking that when he reached it he would turn to the boy and ask him to bring him a drink. He did not notice until it was too late that it was Mrs. Frankel's table he was heading for. The wide, high-domed beach umbrella that stood over it had hidden her from him. He saw that the only way to take himself out of her range was to veer sharply, but remembering the boy behind him and the mistake he had made on the hill, he decided that he could not risk such a sudden movement. What if the kid turned with him, he thought. They would wind up alone together on the golf course. He would never be able to get away from him. "That damned kid is chasing me toward the woman," he thought.

Mrs. Frankel, sitting in her hot, thick city clothing, looked to Stephen like a woman whose picture has just been taken for the

Sunday supplements. ("Mrs. Van Frankel, seated here beneath a two-hundred-pound mushroom she raised herself, has announced . . .") "Well," he thought, "she is always announcing anyway." When he came closer he saw that she would not do for the supplements at all. Her legs, thrown out in front of her, gave her the appearance of an incredibly weary shopper whose trip downtown has failed. Her expression was disconsolate and she seemed, brooding there, like someone who does not quite understand what has gone wrong. It was an unusual attitude for Mrs. Frankel and he stood beside her for a moment. She stared straight ahead toward the useless pool.

"It's funny," she said, turning to him. "A little girl." Stephen had never heard her talk so softly. "Did you see her? Like she was just some piece of cardboard that had been painted like a child. It's too terrible," she said. "To happen here? In the mountains? Just playing like that? All right, so a child is sick, it's awful, but a little child gets sick and sometimes there's nothing you can do and the child dies." Stephen was not sure she was talking to him. "But here, in the mountains where you come for fun, for it to happen here? It's, I don't know, it's too terrible. A thing like that." She looked directly at Stephen but he could not be certain that she saw him. "Did you see the mother? Did you see the fright in the woman's eyes? Like, 'No, it couldn't be.' I was there. The child wanted an ice cream and the mother told her that her lips were blue, she should come out. She looked around for a second, for a second, and when she turned around again . . ." Mrs. Frankel shrugged. "How long could she have been under, five seconds, ten? Is the pool an ocean, they had to search for her? No, it's more important the lifeguard should be talking to his girl-friends so when he hears the screaming he should look up and holler 'What? What? Where? Where?' Who's to blame?" she asked Stephen. "Is God to blame for such a thing? We're not savages. Let's fix the blame a little close to home."

He shifted under her direct stare. She had recovered her stentorian coloratura and for this he was grateful. She was running true to form again and her elegy or whatever it was had only been a kind of interlude as though the woman caught her breath not by ceasing to talk but by lowering her voice. However, her question still hung in the air. He didn't want to play but that didn't seem to make any difference to these people. Even saying No, he wouldn't play, was

playing too in a way, and not saying no, not saying anything, but just walking away as he had done on the hill, or as he had meant to do on the hill, well, that was playing too, and if he had to get into the game, he might as well get in on the side he believed in.

"All right, Mrs. Frankel," he said. "What is it? All morning you've been hinting at some dark secret. Is it that the lifeguard wasn't old enough?" His voice sounded louder than he had intended. He heard it as though he were listening to a recording he could not remember having made. "Is that what's bothering you? Is that the little secret you're determined to let everyone in on? Well, relax, it's no secret. Everybody knows about it. It's too bad, but even if the kid had been eighteen instead of sixteen the little girl would still have drowned."

"The lifeguard was only sixteen?" the woman asked. It was impossible that she didn't know. She must have guessed, must have suspected it. That had to be the reason for her outrage.

"The lifeguard was only sixteen?" she repeated. It was too much; he couldn't be the one she learned it from. He would renege. "Only sixteen?" she insisted.

"I don't know how old he is," he said. "That's not the point. It was an accident. What difference does it make how old he is?" Only now was he conscious that the boy had not left them. He was standing about twenty feet away, listening. Stephen remembered seeing Bieberman stand in the same attitude just that morning, his head bowed low under the weight of his embarrassment, buffered from his enemies by the Social Director. No, Stephen thought, he would not be anyone's champion.

Blithely he changed the subject. Seemingly without reason he began to tell Mrs. Frankel of the walk he had just taken, of his vague plans for the future. She listened politely and even nodded in agreement once or twice to things he said. He remained with her in this way for about ten minutes, but when he started to leave he caught for a moment Mrs. Frankel's angry stare. "It's better we should all get out," she said.

Stephen lay beside Norma beyond the closed-in tennis court. He watched the moon's chalk silver disintegrate and drift icily to the lawn. They had not spoken for a quarter of an hour. He did not know whether she was asleep. The ground was very damp. He could feel, beneath the blanket, the evening's distillation like a kind

of skin. He raised himself on one elbow and looked at Norma's face. Her eyes were closed and he lay back down again and watched the sky.

The lawn was deserted; the exodus of late that afternoon had ended; the last cars from the city had gone back. He thought of Bieberman, alone beside the pool, and could still see the old man's awful face as he waved at the departing guests, pretending that it was only the natural end of their vacation that took them back.

Stephen pulled a blade of grass from beside the blanket.

"The slob," he said aloud.

Norma stirred beside him, made a small sound, like a whimper.

Stephen only half heard her. "The slob. He stood in the driveway and waved at them. He shook their hands and said he'd save their rooms. He's been a host too long. He even told the bellboy where to put everything." He tore the grass in half and threw one piece away. "The slob. I was ashamed for him."

He rolled the grass between his fingers. Feeling its sticky juice, he threw it away in disgust. "Even the Social Director. Did you hear him? 'I'm sorry, Bieberman, but I've got to have people. I've got to have people, right?' And Bieberman told him, 'You're a fine actor. You give a professional performance.' It made me sick. And Mrs. Frankel didn't say a word. She didn't have to. He gave himself away."

"The poor thing," Norma said. Her voice was low and cool, not sleepy at all. He turned to her and smiled.

"Who, Bieberman?"

"I meant the little girl," she said. Her voice was flat. He studied her pale face and the skin which looked cooler and softer than he remembered ever having seen it. She seemed smaller somehow and, in a way he did not mind, older. It may only be the moon, he thought.

He touched her cheek with his fingers. "You would have gone with them, wouldn't you?" he asked softly. She didn't answer. She turned her head and his hand dropped to the blanket. "You've done that twice today," he said.

"Have I?"

He looked at her body. She lay straight back, her arms at her sides. He rolled toward her quickly and his arm fell across her breast. She tried to move away from him, but she seemed unsure of herself. He grabbed her arms and pinned them to her sides and kissed her on the mouth. In a few minutes, he thought, my vacation

begins. A nice Jewish girl in a nice deserted Jewish hotel. She shook her head ferociously. His face fell on top of hers and he forced it with his weight toward the blanket. He felt her body stiffen, her arms go rigid. Then her arms shook in a rage against him and he was helpless to hold them at her sides. She was very strong and with a sudden convulsive movement she threw him off. She sprang up quickly and stood looking down at him.

"Get away from me," Stephen said.

"Stephen . . ."

"Get away from me."

"Stephen, I wouldn't have gone back."

"Get away."

"All right," she said quietly. She turned and started away.

"There she goes," he called after her. "Don't touch her, she's in mourning." His anger rose in him. "Hey come back, I've got an idea. We'll have a lynching. We'll string the kid up to the diving board and hang Bieberman from a beach umbrella."

She was moving from him quickly, back to the hotel. He got up and started after her. He put out his hand to stop her but she eluded him and Stephen saw himself stumble forward, his empty hand reaching toward her. He recovered quickly and walked along slightly behind her, talking to her. He felt like a pedlar haggling but he couldn't help himself. "The drowning loused things up, didn't it? It killed a stranger, but nobody around here knows from strangers." She broke into a run. From the way she ran Stephen could tell she was crying. He ran after her and heard her sobbing. "Let's blame someone. The lifeguard. Bieberman. You want to know what to blame? Blame cramps and the kid's lousy Australian crawl." As they approached the hotel steps Stephen halted. Norma continued up and Stephen called after her. "Damn you. Do you hear? I damn you." She walked into the hotel and Stephen slumped on the steps. He clapped his palms together nervously in a raged applause. "That kid, that lousy kid," he thought. Gradually, he forced himself to calm. He thought of his tantrum as he would of a disease which recurs despite its cure.

When the world had quieted he knew that he was not alone. He realized that he had been vaguely aware of someone on the porch when he turned from Norma and let her go inside. He looked around and saw in the shadows about twenty feet away the silhouette

of a man propped against the side of the porch. In the dark he could not make out his face.

"Bieberman?"

The man came toward Stephen from the dark recesses of the porch. He walked slowly, perhaps uncertainly, and when he passed in front of the hotel entrance he was caught in the light slanting down from the interior like a gangplank secured to the building.

"Ah, Feldman." The voice was deep and mocking.

"Mr. Bieberman," Stephen said softly.

The man stayed within the light. Stephen rose and joined him nervously but Bieberman still did not move. "It's about time for bed," Stephen said. "I was just going up."

"Sure," Bieberman said. "So this will be your last night with us, hah Feldman?"

Stephen looked at him, feeling himself, as they stood together within the close quarters of the light, somehow under attack. "I hadn't planned for it to be."

"Planned?" The old man laughed. "The girl will be going in the morning. What will there be to keep you? The food?" He laughed again. "You'll leave tomorrow. But I thank you for staying the extra day. It will make me a rich man, and I can go myself to a hotel." Stephen noticed the bottle in Bieberman's hand. The old man followed Stephen's glance and looked up, smiling broadly. "Schnapps," he said, holding the bottle up. "A little schnapps. I've been sitting here on my porch and I'm on a deck chair on the *Queen Mary* which in honor of my first voyage over is keeping a kosher kitchen. The only thing wrong is that once in a while someone falls overboard and it upsets me. If we weren't three days out, I would call my wife she should swim up from the city and we would go back."

Stephen smiled and Bieberman offered him the bottle. He took it and, unconsciously wiping off the neck, began to drink.

"I guess I will be going," Stephen said.

"I guess you will."

It was just what he wanted, perfect for his mood, to come after the long and trying day to the councils of the sage and talk to an old man, somewhere outdoors, but with indirect lighting. "I shouldn't be here," he said. "It was supposed to be a lark. I didn't come slumming, don't think that. But it didn't work out. I guess I just wanted to fool around. I really wanted to fool around."

"Yeah," Bieberman said. "I know you guys. You've got a suitcase filled with contraceptives. Fooey."

"I just wanted to fool around," Stephen repeated.

"Nobody fools. Ever," Bieberman said.

"You said it," Stephen said.

Bieberman went back into the dark wing of the porch. Stephen followed him. "I don't want you to think I'm leaving for the same reason as the others. I don't blame you." The old man didn't answer. "I really don't," Stephen said.

Stephen almost lost him in the shadows. "A boy who likes to fool around doesn't blame me," he heard the old man say to himself.

Stephen paused. "Well," he said lamely, "goodnight." He went toward the door.

"Feldman, tell me, you're an educated person," Bieberman said suddenly. "Do you really think they could sue me?"

Stephen turned back to him. "I don't see how," he said.

"But the lifeguard, the boy. If I knew he was a boy? If I knew he was sixteen? If they could prove that, couldn't they sue?"

"How could they find that out?" Stephen said, annoyed at the insistent tone in the old man's voice.

"Well, I wouldn't tell them. I wouldn't run an ad in the *Times,* but if they knew it could they sue me?"

"I suppose they could try, I don't know. I'm no lawyer. I don't see how they could find you responsible."

"My guests did."

"They'll forget."

"Ah," the old man said.

"Next year your place will be full again."

"Yes, I suppose so," he said sadly.

"Wait a minute, it wasn't your fault."

"It made them sick," Bieberman said so softly Stephen thought he was talking to himself. "All they could do was get away. Some of the women couldn't even look at me. Sure, that's why the Catskills and Miami Beach and Las Vegas and all those places are so important. That's why a man named Bieberman can have his name written across a hotel, and on towels." Stephen couldn't follow him. "I mean, what the hell," he said, suddenly talking to Stephen again. "Does Spinoza get his name written on towels?"

"Why don't you come inside?" Stephen said, offering him his arm.

"When a little girl drowns in such a place where nobody must drown, where you pay good money just to keep everybody on top

of the water, it's a terrible thing. I understand that. You're not safe anywhere," Bieberman said. "Not anywhere. You go to a football game and all of a sudden the man on the loudspeaker calls for a doctor it's an emergency. Not during a holiday, you think. You think so? You think not during a holiday? You think so? In a forest even, by yourself, one day you notice how the deer are diseased or how the rivers are dried up, something."

"Come on inside, Mr. Bieberman," Stephen said.

"Feldman, listen to me. Do me a favor, yeah? Tomorrow when you get back to the city, maybe you could call up those people and tell them what the lifeguard told you. You're the only one who knew about it."

The old man lighted a cigarette. Feldman could see the glowing tip pulsating softly as Bieberman spoke. He tried to see his face but it was too dark.

"You're crazy," Stephen said finally.

"I'm responsible," he said sadly.

"Well, I'm not," Stephen said.

"You are, Feldman. You're a witness. A witness is responsible. There's always something he can do. He can call the police. He can try to take away the robber's gun. A witness is responsible."

Stephen got up quickly. He walked across the darkened wing of the porch and came abruptly into the slanting yellow light. Bieberman called him and he turned around. "Feldman," he said. "I mean it, tell them you heard me brag once how I saved a couple hundred bucks." Stephen shook his head and started carefully down the steps, afraid he would stumble in the dark. "Feldman, I mean it," Bieberman called.

He took the rest of the steps quickly, forgetting the danger. He was going toward the empty pool. He turned around. A light was on in Norma's room. He could still hear Bieberman calling his name. He stood among the beach umbrellas on the wide dark lawn and listened to the old man's desperate voice. "Feldman. Feldman." It was as though he was hiding and Bieberman had been sent out to look for him. "Feldman, I mean it."

All right, he thought, all right, damn it, all right, all right. He would wait until the morning and then he would go to Norma's room and apologize and they would go back to the city together and he would investigate some jobs and they would continue to see each other and, after a while, perhaps, he would ask her to marry him.

A. R. AMMONS:

Requiem

1. Mind

The strawberries along the roadbank in the hills bloomed,
the starwhite petals brilliant and melty in the sun as frost:
a glimmer of angels through the pines
    rained fine needles, blanketing the rich fruit.

On Rome's hills stand Respighi's musical pines,
aural columns of light, beingless but with minds.
Rising from banana trees in Mexico one, beyond
    the clouds, comes into skies of pines on rocky tops.

Thus when I saw the strawberries, I rose into the singing trees
and the angels, white
sharks in a glittering sea,
    massacred me.
My blood drops still to the red pulp of wild strawberries
whose white shark flowers
will call any man into the waters of the boughs.

Oh, my mind runs down the moon's glass tears
and plucks them up (tektites) frozen from the land.

    No creation equals a moment's consciousness.
    No cymbal cones and crashes peaks so.
    No white shark stabs so.

Along the blade the dune thistle blows,
opening thorny hemispheres
of yellow florets half-deep in purple stain
    and spears of onion grass rise sleek and clean
from the gray and gritty sand.
To stand with landward hair enduring these
requires sharks in the eyes, the backing of seas.

The coffin-carrier cries and the crow "cars" over the salt creeks.

2. Event

The day after,
after the golden culminations and unfuneraled dead,
after the nuclear trees drifting
on cloudy stems,
and the fruits of knowledge
and the knowledge of those golden high-capped trees,
flaking, settling out,
after the transfigurations
and dark visitations,
groans and twitching resentments,
after the golden culminations
and the trunks of violent trees stalking the vacant land,
there rose an irrelevant dawn:

the white shell lay spiraled on the beach as it had lain
and the surf, again unheard,
eased to primal rhythms
of jellyfishing heart, breaking into mind;
ants came out and withered in the sun;
the white shark
sucked at the edge of the sea on the silent, reddened morning;

and all the white souls sailing
sailed, funneling out into eternity;
by the wharf, dolphin bobbled
belly-up with his poet, all his nudging sea-cleaning done;
briery the earth, iced
with bones, rolled into time.

3. Contraction

Repenting creation, God said,
    As you know I Am,
God,
because I do not have to be consistent:
what was lawful to my general plan
    does not jibe
with my new, specific will;
what the old law healed
is reopened
    in the new.
I have drawn up many covenants to eternity.

Returning silence unto silence,
the Sumerian between the rivers lies.
His skull crushed and moded into rock
    does not leak or peel.
The gold earring lies in the powder
of his silken, perished lobe.
The incantations, sheep trades, and night-gatherings
    with central leaping fires,
roar and glare still in the crow's-foot
walking of his stylus on clay.
Under surgery the sick man rolls and
    vomits on the temple floor,
the anesthetic words of reciting priests
licking grooves through his frantic mind.
The dust has dried up all his tears.
    He sleeps out the old unending drug of time.

The rose dies, man dies, the world dies, the god
grows and fails, the born universe dies
    into renewal,
and all endures the change,
totally lost and totally retained.

JOSEPH E. BAKER:

Ivory Tower as Laboratory: Pater and Proust

The search for sound esthetic principles appropriate to the newest of the great arts, that of the novel, has been misled into strange errors. It is as if medicine in seeking a cure for polio had assumed that this can be based mainly on what is known about smallpox and half the cases of tuberculosis, with a few passing references to the mumps. True, they are all diseases, and the philosopher may be able to generalize about some features they have in common. But we would not get very far talking about Disease. The arts, too, are individual—more individual than the sciences—and we do not get very far trying to handle novels by first deducing what Art is by analyzing music, and then applying the results to prose fiction.

An esthetic developed from modern painting may not fit the modern novel, and *vice versa.* I was referring to the novel since Henry James. In "The Art of Fiction," 1884, James himself said "the analogy between the art of the painter and the art of the novelist is, so far as I am able to see, complete . . . as the picture is reality, so the novel is history. . . . But history also is allowed to represent life; it is not, any more than painting, expected to apologize." Yet at the very moment he was writing this, painting had reached the end of the long epoch when it could represent life without being expected to apologize. "Modern" art theory took precisely the opposite road.

Nevertheless, the representational purpose to which James appeals may still be valid for the novel. We will continue to subject to such analysis even Joyce's *Ulysses,* which has more in common with "modern art" (in the narrowest sense of the phrase) than most modern novels, those of James included. In reviewing Frank O'Connor's *The Mirror in the Roadway, A Study of the Modern Novel* in the December 1957 *Encounter,* Graham Hough says, "his main thesis is surely sound—that the essential foundations of the novel, which it neglects at its peril, are the representation of actual living, in the conditions of an actual, specific time and place." This goes

back to Aristotle's theory that the "maker" in creating a poetic fiction produces imitations of men in action—not arbitrary forms, but governed by "probability," based, obviously, on Aristotelian observation. Such observation can be as scientific as that displayed by the Master of Those who Know when he is comparing political systems or biological specimens. James himself can be studied as a social anthropologist.

But from the middle of the nineteenth century there have been critics, including James to some extent, who have deliberately turned away from the broad road of humanistic portrayal, in the name of unhampered esthetic freedom. The Esthetic Movement has given us extremes of formalism, like that of Malraux, whose *Voices of Silence* (1951) hails with mystical exaltation "modern art . . . substituting the specific value of art for the values to which art was subordinated" before we were "delivered from the idea that plastic art aims first to represent" this world of appearance.[1] Nor, according to Malraux, do the novel and the drama aim at representation. The artist is "he who creates forms,"—similar to musical forms.[2] "Art is not quality of vision, nor submission to the real, nor painting of sentiments, nor expression of history. Art is invention of forms . . ."—so André and Jean Brincourt summarize this theory in contrasting it with that of Proust and Bergson.[3] We may add that according to Malraux the artist quite properly dwells in what Tennyson called "the Palace of Art" and others the "Ivory Tower": "Like every conversion, the discovery of art is the rupture of the relation between a man and the world."[4]

Formalist theories like this offer little help to those who wish to make penetrating studies of portrait painting instead of music. And they seem inadequate if we wish to comprehend the novel, even though Malraux is himself a novelist. Surely his fictional forms bear some relation to the world they portray, not so arbitrary, so irresponsibly "creative," as this theory would have it. Immersed in the mature critical reading of novels, one turns with relief from such esthetic formalism to a statement like that of the scientist-

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[1] André Malraux, *Les Voix du Silence* (Paris, 1951), pp. 603, 589–590.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 353, 308.
[3] *Les Oeuvres et les Lumières* (Paris, 1955), p. 176. (My translation.)
[4] *Les Voix du Silence*, p. 318. (Thus I translate *"Comme toute conversion, la découverte de l'art est la rupture d'une relation entre un homme et le monde."*)

novelist C. P. Snow: "investigation is in itself a moral act (which is incidentally what gives Proust his moral backbone)."[5] And it is important to notice that the title of Proust's great work does not refer to "remembrance" in the sense of reverie, but rather to *recherche*—"research, inquiry, investigation"—an active "seeking" not of "things past" but something "lost"—*temps perdu,* which in one aspect in the novel means "time wasted" (wasted in social frivolities, when the author might have been in his Ivory Tower, creating art).

For there are different modes of living in the Ivory Tower. And the Esthetic Movement has had diverse heirs. So far, I have indicated the extreme opposition between the formalists and those who would have art be a representation of the same world studied objectively by the scientist. It is a conflict that has been brought over from art criticism to literary criticism by the specious reasoning which begins, "Literature is an art; therefore. . . ." That route can land us in a bog, if we pursue it with our heads in post-impressionist clouds and push on with blind logic to the next stage: "And the novel is literature; therefore its deepest principles are the same as those of music." We can get out of this bog only by stopping to think what great novels really are, as they are experienced by mature and sensitive readers. Or, at least, what they are not. They are not anything so fanciful and irresponsible as mere forms wilfully created with no responsibility to the realities of the material and social world.

Between the two extremes I have mentioned there is a third position that has received less attention than it deserves. Its practitioners have been indebted to the Esthetic Movement; yet some of their positions have been automatically annexed by the rival older school. Without wishing to advocate this third way as the final and sole approach to the novel, I do wish to show where it stands. It is represented, in theory at least, by Pater and by Proust. Both of these writers were influenced by Ruskin's art criticism—not at all by Ruskin's economics or even by the moral and sociological side of his theory of art. Aware of the falsifications of Ruskin's *Praeterita,* we might argue that this is also semi-fiction of the genre of *The Child in the House* or *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu.* But nowhere did Ruskin work out the implications of the theory; and indeed it would not have been consistent with his total philosophy.

[5] "The Habit of Truth," *New Republic,* Aug. 18, 1958, p. 26, in reviewing (with admiration) Brownowski's *Science and Human Values.*

Pater's position in the Esthetic Movement is ambivalent, to say the least. There is a side to Pater which turns towards formalism; *e.g.,* he says (in "Style"), "in literary as in all other art, structure is all-important," quotes with approval Flaubert's statement that "the *form* was the work itself," and admits that "the tendency of what has been here said is to bring literature too under those conditions, by conformity to which music takes rank as the typically perfect art."[6] But in the next paragraph he concludes the essay by setting as the measure of *great* art that it be devoted "to the glory of God," or to ennobling us, or "to the redemption of the oppressed," etc. This would take Pater out of the Esthetic Movement entirely. Actually he seldom strays far from his Ivory Tower. But in his withdrawal from the world it is noteworthy that he wishes to live not only with art but also with philosophy and knowledge. Burning with a hard gemlike flame, "we may well grasp at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge. . . ." So he puts it, at the end of *The Renaissance.* At the beginning of that work he had quoted Matthew Arnold with seeming agreement, and then turned to a quite different interpretation that is significant for our purposes here: " 'To see the object as in itself it really is,' has been justly said to be the aim of all true criticism whatever; and in aesthetic criticism the first step towards seeing one's object as it really is, is to know one's own impression as it really is, to discriminate it, to realize it distinctly." In this statement Pater has given us what was to be the purpose and method of Proust.

Pater and Proust may detach themselves from moral action, but they do not, like Poe, repudiate Truth as a main concern of the artist. Pater says the "one indispensable beauty is, after all, truth," and for the highest literature he demands "that finest and most intimate form of truth, the *vraie vérité.*"[7] Proust says that the *vérités* "which the intelligence grasps directly"—clearly, openly—"in the world of full light"—are less profound than "those which life has communicated to us, in spite of ourselves, in an impression, material because it has entered by our senses, but of which we can extricate the inner spirit."[8] Even when they may sound Platonic,

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[6] *Appreciations* (Macmillan, London, 1889, reprinted 1944), pp. 18, 34–35.

[7] *Ibid.,* p. 32.

[8] Marcel Proust, *Le Temps Retrouvé,* vol. II, chap. 3, p. 24. (This novel is Tome VIII of *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu,* Paris, 1927. The translations are my own.)

both Pater and Proust are speaking of impressions which come to us through the physical senses. For the latter, the approach of death itself brings anguish for this grave reason: "I was discovering the destructive action of Time, at the very moment when I wished to take upon myself to render clear, to intellectualize, extra-temporal realities, in a work of art."[9] The artist can accomplish this only through his mastery of style, what Pater calls "the medium through which alone he can expose that inward sense of things."[10] Proust contemptuously puts in quotation marks the word *"réalités"* ("as of present time"), the "reality" in which diplomats and financiers are living, and all those who lack "the artistic sense, that is to say, submission to interior reality."[11]

In English literature the classic statement of this distinction is still that fourth paragraph of Pater's "Style," beginning, "The line between fact and something quite different from external fact is, indeed, hard to draw," and ending:

> For just in proportion as the writer's aim, consciously or unconsciously comes to be the transcribing not of the world, not of mere fact, but of his sense of it, he becomes an artist, his work *fine* art; and good art . . . in proportion to the truth of his presentment of that sense . . . And further, all beauty is in the long run only *fineness* of truth, or what we call expression, the finer accommodation of speech to that vision within.[12]

The greatness of true art, says Proust, is to rediscover the deeper reality which we may die without having known, "and which is quite simply our life, the true life, life at last discovered and made clear, consequently the only life really lived, that life which in one sense is found at each instant in every man as well as in the artist—to grasp again our life, and also the life of others; for style, for the writer as well as for the painter, is a question not of technique but of vision. . . . Searching to discern beneath matter, beneath experience, beneath words, something that is different, this labor is exactly the opposite to that carried on within us by self-love, passion, habit," and mere intelligence, when these hide from us our *impressions vraies,* by amassing over them nomenclatures and practical

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[9] *Ibid.,* p. 98.
[10] *Appreciations,* p. 33.
[11] *Le Temps Retrouvé,* vol. II, p. 30.
[12] *Appreciations,* p. 6.

ends that we falsely call life.[13] As Pater said in the Conclusion to his *Renaissance,* failure consists in forming habits, for "habit is relative to a stereotyped world, and meantime it is only the roughness of the eye that makes any two persons, things, situations, seem alike."

Both Pater and Proust withdrew to their Ivory Towers and devoted themselves to art and style, but they conceived of style as formulation of truth, and of art as rather humbly submissive to reality. Like the scientist in his laboratory or the scholar among archives the artist is not fleeing to a dream-world; he is engaged in research, *la recherche,* which will enable him—and will enable us—better to understand life, to grasp *la vraie vérité.* He may fail to tell us anything, as the scientist may sometimes fail, but when he fails he will not insist that his misunderstandings are better than anything previously knowable, or that the criterion of justice in representation is irrelevant. In their theory art is not an independent creation which transcends all of reality that might be discovered. Contrast Malraux: "Everyone knows that other worlds exist besides that of the real . . . the world of art is fanciful . . .," *fantastique;*[14] "the great artists are not transcribers of the world, they are *its rivals* . . . the artist has gotten rid of"—*chassé*—not only previous masters but reality also; *il en a chassé la réalité.* "The great work of art is not *vérité* as the artist believes; rather, the work *is;* has sprung up. It is not finished; it is born. It is life face to face with life."[15] Malraux' artist "does not express an experience; he responds to a Call." His "Index" summarizes, "The vision of the artist is at the service of his style, not his style at the service of his vision"; and the text "commences the psychology of artistic creation" with the doctrine that "Painting tends less to see the world than to create another; the world serves the style, which serves the man and his gods" (or his demons—even if he be an atheist); thus Malraux thinks that *"la 'déformation' moderne,"* buttressed by the grotesque figures of primitive ritual, can show us how to think about all art, ridding us of ideas that have been with us since the Greeks.[16] Con-

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[13] *Le Temps Retrouvé,* p. 48–49.

[14] *Les Voix du Silence,* p. 310 *("d'autres mondes que celui du réel").*

[15] *Ibid.,* p. 459 *("Non pas achèvement, mais naissance. Vie en face de la vie.").*

[16] *Ibid.,* pp. 411, 646, 270. We may add pp. 492–493: *"De Baudelaire à Verlaine, de Daumier à Modigliani, que de sacrifices humains! Rarement un si grand nombre de grands artistes offrirent un si grand nombre de sacrifices à un dieu inconnu."*

trast the attitude towards style which Pater admired in Flaubert:

> With Flaubert, the search, the unwearied research, was not for the smooth, or winsome, or forcible word, as such, as with false Ciceronians, but quite simply and honestly, for the word's adjustment to its meaning. The first condition of this must be, of course, to know yourself, to have ascertained your own sense exactly. Then, if we suppose an artist, he says to the reader,—I want you to see precisely what I see.[17]

And the literary artist turns even an argument into "essentially an appeal to the reader to catch the writer's spirit, to think with him, if one can or will—an expression no longer of fact but of his sense of it, his peculiar intuition of a world, prospective or discerned below the faulty conditions of the present, in either case changed somewhat from the actual world."[18] As usual, Proust develops this further than Pater, and in doing so casts a clearer light on the implications of the position they have in common. Both of them think of the artist as turning away from mere externals *to flee not from but towards reality,* seeking real, though fresh, ways of looking at the universe. Proust says,

> Literature which is content merely to describe things, to give a miserable statement of their lines and surface, is, in spite of its realist pretentions, the farthest removed from reality . . . If reality were that kind of leavings from experience, almost the same for everyone . . . without doubt a sort of cinematic film of these things would suffice, and the "style" or "literature" which deviated from their simple data would be an artificial extra [*hors d'oeuvre*]. But is that, indeed, reality? If I tried to analyze for myself what really happens in us at the moment when a thing makes a certain impression on us . . . I perceived that to express these impressions, to write the essential book, the only true book, a great writer does not, in the current sense, have to invent it, because it exists already in each of us, but rather to translate it. The duty and the task of a writer are those of a translator.[19]

Malraux seems to think that art is for the sake of art circles—"creators and amateurs, all those for whom art exists"—and that there is little likelihood that the non-artist can have any valid relationship to art. "It is not upon the artist, but upon the non-artist, that painting acts only as a mode of representation." It is a

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[17] *Appreciations,* p. 28.
[18] *Ibid.,* pp. 4–5.
[19] *Le Temps Retrouvé,* pp. 40–41.

"tenacious illusion" that looks upon art as "a means of representation."[20] Though Proust was a recluse and Malraux a man of political action, Proust's artist is not conceived of as so separate from the rest of mankind, and transcendently superior to life. The last thing Proust has to say on this subject (twenty-one pages from the end of the sixteen-volume novel) is that "Marcel" has a modest conception of his book, as if it were a sort of magnifying glass wherein the customer can read himself. He has used the same metaphor earlier, in the midst of his most extended theorizing on the subject, that is, in the middle of *Le Temps Retrouvé,* the keystone of the intellectual structure of the whole *Recherche du Temps Perdu.* He has just said that a sexual invert like M. de Charlus in reading of normal love affairs gives to the heroines a masculine visage. If he had not, he would have read with no comprehension, "since it was only by this road, narrow and indirect, that he had access to the truths concerning love [*vérités de l'amour*]." Then Proust continues, generalizing:

> In reality, each reader when he reads is reading his own self. The work of the writer is only a kind of optical instrument which he offers the reader, to let him discern that which he might not have seen in himself without the book. The reader's recognition, in himself, of what the book says, is the proof of its truth—and *vice versa*—at least to a certain extent, the difference between the two texts being often imputable not to the author but to the reader.[21]

For Proust, as for Pater, experience is the important thing, the true reality, which he must try with finesse to understand, and to which he fits his expression. "I was realizing that only clumsy and defective perception places all in the object, when all is in the mind; I had lost my grandmother in reality many months after having lost her in fact."[22] One characteristic of Proust's writing that makes us feel that he does care for the truth is the way he will modify what he has just said. Thus, after discussing French attitudes toward Germany, he is careful to add, "That which I remarked as subjective in hate, as in sight itself, did not prevent the object from having real qualities and defects, and did not by any means cause reality to vanish in a pure relativism."[23]

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[20] *Les Voix du Silence,* pp. 317–318.
[21] *Le Temps Retrouvé,* vol. II, p. 70.
[22] *Ibid.,* p. 72.
[23] *Ibid.,* pp. 73–74.

The differences between Pater and Proust do not weaken the importance of the similarities I have sketched here. We must recognize, of course, that Pater is theoretically more concerned with the moment as it passes, whereas Proust is treating what Wordsworth would call "emotion recollected in tranquility." But I say *theoretically,* for I am not convinced that in practice this difference between them is so great. Proust's meditations concerning Memory and Time have been made the subject of many studies, and we need not elaborate them here. In any case, both he and Pater are concerned "to discriminate" impressions, and to find the means to express their experiences with fidelity and truth. Neither of them ascribes to his inner life an ontological status that transcends the world. Like Montaigne, they use their towers as laboratories for introspective self-study *and* to make pertinent comments about the social world they have (a) observed and (b) learned about from books or from other artifacts of the past. They differ from Montaigne in that the Renaissance humanist took himself as a means of learning about man in general. But even this difference could be overstated, for Montaigne often focuses upon his individual peculiarities, and Proust, at least, is often searching for the general laws of human nature, social and psychological. Proust is, among other things, a matchless historian of an objective social phenomenon, the decay of the French aristocracy in the early twentieth century. When an artist deserves this kind of praise we must realize the inadequacy of Malraux' theory, or of any mere formalism. Of course to say that Proust has given us a more adequate analysis than Malraux of the "esthetic" flight from the world of externals, is not to claim that his theory is the complete and final philosophy of literature, or of the novel.

If we accept Proust's theory provisionally, we may wish to try it out on his own masterpiece. The Brincourts, in *Les Oeuvres et les Lumières,* have tried to show that Malraux' theory best fits Proust's novel. But this requires us to ignore too many of the values and achievements that make it great. This is like the attempt to apply formalism by Welleck and Warren, who are forced by their own reasoning to say (giving their own meaning to the word *art*):

> The term "literature" seems best if we limit it to the art of literature, that is, to imaginative literature. . . . If we recognize "fictionality," "invention," or "imagination" as the distinguishing trait of literature, we think thus of literature in terms of Homer, Dante, Shakespeare,

> Balzac, Keats rather than of Cicero or Montaigne, Bossuet, or Emerson. . . . This conception will thus include in it all kinds of fiction, even the worst novel, the worst poem, the worst drama.[24]

This doctrine, which ignores the imaginative quality of Montaigne or Emerson and denies that Cicero is literature, while admitting the worst novels vended by drugstores or the worst dramas filmed by Hollywood—perhaps *preferably* the worst, because of their strong dose of "fictionality" as against some kind of truth—would also of course handicap us in trying to appreciate *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu,* which has so much in common with Montaigne. It would force us to look at Pater as through an optical instrument practically opaque. But, again, the fact that formalism is inadequate does not prove that the Pater-Proust theory is adequate.

Did Proust, in his *Recherche,* successfully discriminate for us his own sense for life? Biographical studies would seem to have answered this question in the negative; for he does not directly express his homosexual attitudes. He seems to be *avoiding* the truth. (One may suspect something of the same sort back of Pater's tortuous and awkward style.) Proust, to reverse what he says of M. Charlus, has given his loved ones a feminine visage, has even feminized masculine names. But the biographical objection may be answered by saying that perhaps indirectly Proust has expressed himself sufficiently to have made some contribution to our understanding of a subject then under a strong taboo; that the very indirectness itself is eloquent. For example, everywhere he looks he sees homosexuals, male and female, except in the first person of the narrative, the literary artist who sees all, knows all, and tries to tell all. The ambiguity appears in his remark that this first person might perhaps be called by Proust's own name, "Marcel." The ostensible writer of the book is therefore a semi-fictitious character in the novel. This device is so common in imaginative literature that we can surely allow it as within the scope of any esthetic theory worthy of serious consideration. We must recognize all sorts of metaphoric and figurative expression of "the truth" or of an author's "personal sense of fact." Not only does Proust set forth the same esthetic theory as Pater, and develop it; he has in *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* produced the greatest masterpiece in conformity with that theory since Pater wrote "Style."

But is that all? Does the Pater-Proust approach offer us anything

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[24] René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (N. Y., 1942), pp. 11, 16.

more than careful self-expression, sometimes carefully masked? Does it grasp "verities"? Pater reveals his own experience in his famous purple passage on *La Gioconda,* but that does not tell us much about Leonardo da Vinci's painting. This is highly subjective. But elsewhere Pater *is* a penetrating critic of art, literature, and cultures, where he does cast light upon the object by what he sees, grasps, and finds expression for in fitting style. It may be said that Pater at his best was a scholarly critic whose work for the world could best be done in the relative retreat of his Brasenose College fellowship. How well did Proust comprehend reality, the inner, psychological reality? We have quoted his observation on how a Charlus could have access to the *vérités de l'amour.* Did Proust grasp these verities? Love between the sexes is an important subject of his *Recherche.* One of the conclusions he insists on from beginning to end—from the affair of Swann, through Marcel's affair with Albertine, to the concluding meditations—is that jealousy must exist before there can be love. Love depends on jealousy, and not *vice versa!* "If we did not have any rivals, the pleasure would not be transformed into love."[25] Surely this does not demonstrate a very profound understanding of normal love; and surely Proust's isolation from normal life made it unlikely that his deep probing of his own impressions would give us much more than a record of his own mind.

But he was not always in isolation. He came into his Ivory Tower after knowing artistocratic society; and one of his greatest merits is his sharp observation of the world about him, "the world" in the narrowest sense of the term. He does not give us another world to take its place; he does not tell us merely how he felt about it. *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* is one of the greatest novels of manners, ranking with those of Fielding, Thackeray, Balzac, Trollope; it is indeed social comedy, dramatic, witty, realistic. It is related also to such memoirs as those of Mme. de Sévigné, whose merits are those of a social observer and analyst. He gives us imitations of men in action; Aristotelian criticism is required to do justice to his achievement.

But reviewing Proust's statements, one finds that he is not limiting the artist to talking always about himself, much less to expressing a personal rebellion against reality. Submission to Aristotelian probability is assumed in his remark to a friend that he too hated

[25] *Le Temps Retrouvé,* vol. II, p. 63.

to see his Swann become ridiculous. "but art is a perpetual sacrifice of sentiment to truth." [26] Proust himself makes the comparison between his calling and that of the scientist:

> The impression is for the writer what experimentation is for the scientist, with this difference: that with the scientist, the work of the intelligence precedes, with the writer it comes afterwards. Whatever we have not had to decipher and clarify by our own personal effort, what was clear before, does not belong to us. Nothing comes from ourselves but that which we draw out from the obscurity that is in us and which others are not aware of. And since art recomposes life exactly, there floats an atmosphere of poetry around those truths which one has attained within oneself.[27]

The subjective is not merely expressed; it is used as a means to discover something objective. If we do not keep this in mind, I think it is easy to be misled by Proust's praise of "instinct" as against intelligence. For example, he says that "instinct dictates duty and intelligence furnishes the excuses for eluding it; only, excuses do not figure at all in art, and intentions are not counted. At every moment the artist must listen to his instinct—which causes art to be what is most real, the most austere school of life, the true Last Judgment." [28]

Even "almost hypnotic suggestion" may be needed to lead us to, not away from, reality. Proust applies this to the novel specifically, in the volume which precedes *Le Temps Retrouvés:* "certain novels are like great temporary sorrows: they abolish habit, putting us back into contact with the reality of life—but only for a few hours, like a nightmare, since the forces of habit, the forgetfulness they produce, the gaiety that they restore, because of the powerlessness of the brain to fight against them and recreate the truth, these forces prevail over the almost hypnotic suggestion of a fine book, which, like all suggestions, has very brief effects." [29]

Proust's writer keeps thinking that he ought to withdraw from the world and get on with his work as an artist, shut up in his room, but he discovers that his work is the portrayal of the society he has known. What had seemed "Time Wasted"—at parties—is, by his Research, recovered, *Retrouvé.*[30] What was unconscious is to be

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[26] André Maurois, *A la Recherche de Proust* (Paris, 1949), p. 287.
[27] *Le Temps Retrouvé,* vol. II, pp. 26–27.
[28] *Ibid.,* p. 26.
[29] *Albertine Disparue,* vol. II, p. 8.
[30] *Ibid.,* p. 64; he speaks of having a mind to *"réparer le temps perdu, de changer de vie, ou plutôt de commencer de vivre . . ."*

made conscious. This is in the central tradition of French culture, not satisfied until everything is brought to lucid statement. Proust is at the opposite extreme from Joyce, and the two authors should not be classed together. Proust's sentences give the flow of thinking, often of problem-solving or conscious search for intellectual understanding, not mainly the stream of present consciousness or symbols from the unconscious. Problems concerned with Memory are important in Proust precisely because Memory is the link between the Ivory Tower where the artist works, by means of his own sensibilities, and that objective social world which he is portraying realistically and judging with the light of critical intelligence. What he gives us is of course not the objective raw materials, but the solutions he has arrived at by his mental work.

In spite of Proust's use of the word "impression," I have avoided calling Proust, or even Pater, an Impressionist, because this would raise the question of their relation to the Impressionist school of painting; and that in turn would require analysis of both theory and practice for more than one painter. It has seemed best here to discriminate the central literary theory common to Pater and Proust, with special reference to the novel. They are not painters, or poets, or dramatists; both wrote criticism and prose fiction and concern themselves especially with problems of style relevant to the novelistic art they practiced. Both were deeply indebted to the Esthetic Movement, especially to that side of it which goes back to Keats' "Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty"; moreover, there is a "need to know" while on earth. In an essay upon the death of Ruskin, Proust says—and he could be echoing Pater—"Properly speaking there is no beauty that is entirely untrue, for esthetic pleasure is precisely that which accompanies the discovery of a truth." [31]

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[31] *Pastiches et Mélanges* (Paris, 1919), p. 185. On p. 187 he says Ruskin is *"pour moi un des plus grands écrivains de tous les temps et de tous les pays."*

P. H. LOWREY:

Fear No More the Heat of the Sun

I saw Anne Abbott again the last time I was down in Maryland; we drove down for the point-to-points, pretty much on the spur of the moment, and I looked up and there she was, as sudden as apparition, still moving like Aphrodite, in spite of the fact that one of the three kids was maybe going on nine, his head already riding up beside that moving shoulder. Looking pretty much the way she did that summer. I did not speak to her, and she did not see me. She probably would not have recognized me if she had, but I was just as glad we did not have to test that. Because what I needed was just to take a good long look at her. And I did. I am afraid I trailed her, following her all around the paddock where they were saddling the jumpers. It is a nice thing they do down there; the paddock is an old snow fence in the middle of a field and you can stand in close and watch the jumps, feeling the curve of the sky above you. It was a very nice thing to see Anne Abbott moving there, in front of some thoroughbred horses. They were good-looking kids, of course, though they made me somehow a little sad.

I tried to explain all of this to my wife afterwards, when we were having a drink in the motel, and that was where the difficulty began. I guess she was a little sore at my leaving her like that, but there was something else too, something deeper. There are moments when my wife, who is really a very attractive girl, can also be very exasperating, yet I like to think she realized, after she laughed, that it was the wrong thing to do. When I tried to tell her about it she laughed, and then came over from the easy chair to the bed where I was propped up and tousled my hair, which she knows I do not like, and kissed me on the forehead in that damnable off-hand way women have and said, "I'm sorry darling," and looked at me in a way she knows I *do* like. I guess I managed a grin, but it must have been a pretty sick grin because she went over to the bureau and poured me another drink and brought it back and put it in my hand and went on in to take a shower. All without saying anything. And of course I lay back on the bed, feeling mutinous as hell, firmly resolved never to tell anything truly private or young again, and wondering what, precisely, it all meant to me.

I guess that is the important thing here.

Why, for instance, do I think there is something dark about it, and why do I think of her in the way I do, and when I do? I think of her in the cold times, especially in the cold of dawn. You know: you wake from a broken sleep, perhaps from the falling terror of nightmare, and you stare out the window at the grey world you thought you knew, and you hear the cold spring wind blowing and memory begins to tick inside you like the little clock on the bedside table and you wonder where you went wrong.

But there is nothing dark or cold or gray about the way I see Anne Abbott, or for that matter, in the way I saw her the other day. In the deep and secret eye of the mind I see her always in a particular way: it is always August and everything is bursting with the summer's heat and I see her standing by a rail fence, looking over at some horses, quite far out. Wearing a simple pink linen dress, with the long length of her brown legs curving up from the blue and white pumps. She is always standing in mottling sunlight, under light trees, with somewhere above her a bird going, and that carved head of hers erect above her fine body, and the color of sunlight getting all caught up in her bronze-yellow hair. She was large, with full hips and breasts even then, but she had enough height to carry it. And if you were twelve, in that summer, when she walked you had to turn away it was so beautiful.

That is the way I see her, somewhere out in those valleys where in the spring and fall they run the point-to-points. Where the big, quivering hunters come driving at the high, solid rail fences and gather to uncoil and lift wild and soaring like tremendous birds and when they go over for a moment you cannot breathe. And where, in the late summer, in August, there are long green pastures and horses grazing and wheat fields and the brooks run clear and cold, and far back, up among the tall tulip and oak trees, the big houses stand almost hidden.

But that is not where I first saw her, and I am not even sure now I ever did see her like that. I first saw her on a croquet court. As soon as she came home from Italy, where she had been studying painting instead of going to college, every boy in the neighborhood got very serious about croquet. The Abbotts had a large L-shaped lawn and we used to go there to play all sorts of games with the Abbott kids, Sis and Janey and Bobo. Bobo was the oldest except

Anne; he was seventeen. And then one day I came over to wait for Sis and Janey to finish lunch so we could play some croquet, and she was sitting on a blanket, just beyond the garage, drying her hair. She had on white shorts and she was very brown and her hair looked redder than it really was when she combed it like that, in the sun.

"Hi," she said, "I don't remember you. You must be new."

"We moved out last October," I said, though it was very hard to say anything. She saw that and tried to make it easy for me. She talked to me until Sis came out, still chewing on a peanut butter sandwich. Sis's hair was yellow, straight like her body, and it tangled down across her shoulders. Sis's hair had a funny whitish look, and I stood there looking at her hair, and then at Anne's.

"That dumb Bobo," Sis said, "he doesn't know anything. Just because he got in Dartmouth."

"Don't talk with your mouth full of peanut butter," Anne said. Then the two Grace boys were there. The Grace boys' father was a Chesapeake Bay pilot, and I think it was this that made them always shy and silent.

"Bobo around?" Ted Grace said. To Sis. They never hung around the Abbotts' lawn much, but they did that summer. Neither one of them would ever look at Anne directly or speak to her. But you could see something in their faces when they did not know you were watching.

Bobo came out and the screen door slammed with that hot sound a screen door makes in early summer. A nice sound, that goes with the way the concrete feels through your sneakers, warm and even. Bobo was eating dates, putting them into his mouth carefully and then sucking loudly at each of his fingers in turn. After he stood there a while he sighed in that tired way he had and said, "Oh hell." Anne was still brushing her hair with long sweeping strokes and letting it fall first over one brown shoulder and then over the other.

"Jeez you got fat in Italy," Bobo said finally. "Let's play some croquet." Typically Bobo.

That is how it was for the first two weeks Anne Abbott was home. The kids in the neighborhood, the boys my age and a little older, would drift in from playing around the new houses that were going up, or from baseball, to play croquet. Because there were only six mallets not everybody could play; if you were lucky and timed

it right you could get there after six people were already playing, and then you could go sit close, but not too close, to where Anne was lying on a blanket, and pretend to watch the game. Sometimes she would be flopped over on her stomach reading a book, and then you just sat, but more often she would be lying on her back, getting the sun, or sitting up, brushing her hair, and then she would talk to you slowly, in bursts with long silences, saying "Hmmmm?" in a lazy, half-asleep way when you asked her something; saying something simple, like how good the sun felt. Sometimes she would play croquet too, but not very often. She seemed always a little alone, as though a part of her had not come back from Italy yet.

It was Bobo who took the croquet seriously. Bobo was an aggressive bastard, and would get mad and argue and swear at some of the kids playing, generally somebody like fat little Johnny Bruton or Henny Taylor, who had thick glasses and was called foureyes. And when he did that, if Anne was there, she would laugh for a while in a funny, indrawn way she had, and then she would get mad at him.

"Bobo," she would say finally, "you're a stinker," and if she was playing, would let her mallet fall gently and just walk away, right in the middle of the game. Sometimes she took an easel from the garage and went down to the back fence and did water colors. The back fence bordered on a Catholic farm, and she liked to paint the horses pastured there. She loved just to stand and watch the horses, and she could watch them for a long time.

Outside of these things she did not seem to do much. Sometimes she drove around a little in the Ford phaeton the Abbotts had, or in the old gray Ford if her father had taken the phaeton. But she did not go out much, even at night. Not then.

"I'm just resting," she said. "I'm tired. All my friends are gone somewhere. If you're away two years you don't know anybody when you come back."

And so she was around a lot. She was nice to all of us, and maybe it makes sense that I remember those weeks as perfect, sun every day but not too hot; good June days with everything fat and lazy. The grass smelled sweet when you stretched out flat on it and the woody sound of the croquet mallets hung in the air and every once in a while Anne said something, off to one side of you.

But about the first of July it changed. That was when the Strattons moved in next door to us, and I saw Joe Stratton and that

damned motorbike for the first time. I do not think it would have happened the way it did if it had not been for the motorbike. Maybe it would have happened anyway, but I do not like to believe that; I do not think she would have noticed him if it had not been for the accident.

While the moving van was still in the driveway, Joe was in the garage working on his motorbike. It was a heavy black affair, an English bike that was like a baby motorcycle, and I have to admit I wanted to see it too. He was crouched down behind the frame, fiddling with something, and when I came in shyly, to make friends, he raised his head just high enough to look over the fat, streamlined gas tank and said, "What the hell do you want?" He was built light and wiry, like a jockey, and at first I thought he was about my age but he wasn't; he was sixteen.

His face had a tight, shiny look, peering over the swelling gas tank; his face was white and sharp and his eyes were very black and popped a little and his voice matched his face. When he spoke his freckled forehead knotted up and his mouth twisted into what might have been a grin but his eyes looked at you flat and hard. I can see that face a lot of ways now, twisted with pain on the day the motorbike crashed; looking mean when he tried to hurt me; looking innocent the day the policeman came, asking about the bee-bee gun. "Me?" Joe said. "Me shoot out windows? Everybody knows it's this kid's gun."

The Strattons were all strange, I found out later, a little twisted. Charlie, the bachelor uncle, was bald and moonfaced and lived on the third floor by himself. He lisped slightly and used to try to give me things, though that was all he did. And Mrs. Stratton's vocal chords were paralyzed so she could make no sound but a strange breathy wheeze, poor lady. She wore purple dresses and a choker to conceal the little button in her neck and carried an ugly Pekingese named Ming Toy which shook and slobbered if you came near her. No one ever spoke of Mr. Stratton, and you never saw Joe's grandmother, though you could hear her sometimes, yelling something. But I did not know all that until later.

That first day I guess I wanted to know about the motorbike and about him. There is a time of not knowing and being afraid of knowing and yet wanting to know. I just stood there when he looked at me and said that harsh phrase.

"Come'ere," he said, jerking his head back. Whenever he said

something his head jerked back or a little to one side. "Come'*ere*!" he said again, when I did not move. "What the hell's the matter with you, kid?" And he was down behind the motorbike again. "Hold this," he said, pointing and giving me a wrench. I think now he may have meant it as a friendly gesture, but I did not think that then. My hands were shaking, holding the wrench, and I could see he was peering through the frame at me, grinning.

"You're a hot one," he said. "You think I didn't see you out there watching me. I saw you all right."

I didn't say anything and he kept on tightening while I held the wrench. "Are all the kids in this punk neighborhood like you?" he said. He kept cursing the motor in a slow acid way, too, using the words I had heard and knew but did not use yet. When he stood up and looked at me I was afraid again. He put his tools down and came around the bike and took hold of my arm. He did not hold the arm very hard but massaged it, probing for the muscles with his fingers.

"How tough are you?" he said. "Pretty tough?"

And before I could say or do anything his fist flashed up in a short hard arc and clipped the muscles. He hit as hard as he could and the tears sprang into my eyes even before he hit again and a third time. Then he began to laugh.

"Aw come on," he said, "don't be such a damn baby! Nobody's going to kill you." He was still laughing, as though he were laughing at something inside himself. "I'll show you about the bike," he said. "Come on, quit, or I'll do it again." And he was pretty nice then, explaining all the parts of the bike and showing me his tools.

That was the beginning of it. From then on, unless I could slip out the back way, Joe Stratton would stop me and make me stay with him. He was always making you do something, or making you go along wherever he went, sometimes on the back of the motorbike, so that it was hard for me to get away to the Abbotts and croquet. Sometimes Joe was pretty nice, in a way. But every so often, without warning he would grab your hand and knead the bones or corn you, bringing his knee up into your thigh, or drive you into a corner with a rain of short jabs to the ribs. Then he would laugh and tell you he would do something nice for you.

The only other person he knew at first was a man named Reese; he liked to make you go over to Reese's with him and lie on the grass while Reese cut the lawn, or to work in Reese's shop or on

Reese's little red Model-A. Reese was a funny guy too, with yellow bushy eyebrows, but almost bald. Once he came around and very politely asked my mother to send ten post cards to the radio station for him. "I'm trying out for a cowboy singer," he said, "and all my friends are sending cards." And he smiled very pleasantly. He was good to me, always, and sometimes made things for me in his shop. Usually after he cut the lawn for a while he would come lie on his stomach with Joe and me and tell us about the Depression and the Navy.

"Yeah," he would say, "I've done my hitch. Boy, you can *have* it." Then Joe would lie on his elbows with a piece of grass between his teeth and ask Reese about the girls he had in South American ports. He was always asking Reese about girls, using the words I did not yet use, and Reese didn't like that. "Goddamnit," he would say, flipping his head at me, "if you're gonna have him around keep your mind out of the gutter." And Joe would grin and go on and sometimes Reese really got mad. Then Joe would tell Reese what a punk neighborhood it was.

"Who's there to know?" he would say. "Hell, I had lots of friends in the old place."

It was on one of these days, when we were lying on Reese's lawn, that Anne Abbott drove past in the phaeton. When she saw me she put up her hand and waved. Neither Reese nor Joe said anything for a minute, but simply watched her blond head disappearing down the street.

"Oh *ho*," Joe said finally, "so you know her!"

"Sure," I said, and told him all I knew about her. I don't know why I did that; I should have lied to him. That is a part of it that bothers me. I don't know why I told him, and I blame myself for it. When I finished he looked at me a long time.

"You twerp," he said then, and waited again, looking at me. "Maybe I was wrong; maybe it isn't such a punk neighborhood." Reaching over with his arms, he put my head down in the grass and began to give me a Dutch rub. "Maybe you're gonna be more good than I thought," he said, grinding my face down into the sweet-smelling, new-cut grass, really pouring it on with the rub. "You twerp," he said again, and then Reese made him stop.

But the next afternoon, when Reese was not there, he made me take him around to the Abbotts and introduce him. The Abbotts were pretty nice to him, all except Bobo. Bobo ignored him, and

that didn't help, because it just made Anne act nice to him, to make up for Bobo. She asked him if he would like to play croquet, and I sat and watched them. When we got back to the Strattons' garage, riding double on the motorbike, he did a funny thing. He backed me into a corner of the garage and started letting his fists dig into me, slamming in past my drawn-up arms, feeling for the soft parts of the body, really hurting.

"You're crazy about her, aren't you?" he said. "You even try to laugh like her." His fists kept digging in so that I had no breath to answer, and he was not laughing now, the way he usually did. "You ever say a word to her about this," he said, "I'll get you. You remember that!"

And from then on we both went around every afternoon. While we were there he had to be decent to me, but as soon as we got away it would start again. Once he tied me up in the loft over the garage. It was very hot up there, and full of wasps, and I lay there a long time, sweating like a pig and being scared and trying to get the ropes off. I finally managed it, but my mother found the red marks on my wrists. I said it was just a game.

But the worst times were later, when he got to know her better. After a couple of weeks of sitting around with her or playing croquet, Joe would tell me to run along or say something ugly to me and then Anne would do something nice.

"Oh Joe," she would say, "stop it. I mean it now." And sometimes she let her hands fall on my shoulders and I would not be able to see because of the way her hands were. And after those times Joe was worse. I never said anything about it, though, not to anybody. Just as I did not say anything to the policeman, when he came to ask about the bee-bee gun. I did not squeal on him, tell that he had borrowed it. He thought I did, but I never said a word. The policeman seemed to know it was Joe without my saying anything to him.

Sometimes when it got very bad, though, I would go up to my room and lock the door and lie on the bed, trying to forget my aching body by thinking about Anne Abbott, seeing her standing with one foot up on the rail, gazing out in that cool clear way at some horses. And sometimes even that did not seem to do much good.

I think I could have stood it all right, though, if it had just gone on that way, because a lot was changing in Anne Abbott then too, and she did not take much notice of Joe Stratton after the first week or so. She was beginning to have dates again by the end of

July; we could see her driving past in the dusk lots of nights with some nice-looking guy in a palm-beach suit and maybe a panama hat. In convertibles, usually, and usually a different guy. And sometimes she was at the Club in the afternoons, or out with her mother somewhere, so we did not see as much of her as we did right after she got back. When she was not around, Joe would leave the Abbotts' back yard and ride around and around the subdivision on the motorbike, going very fast. It was one of those times, when he was coming past a bunch of us as fast as he could, that the back wheel caught some loose gravel and the motorbike slewed crazily and went over, down on its side, bouncing, just missing little Johnny Bruton. It happened very fast, Joe rolling over and over in the street, yelling with pain, and the motorbike clean up on Reese's lawn with its engine going full and wild. Nobody knew how to turn it off and when I ran to Joe he was crying and saying a lot of words Sis and Janey ought not to have heard and telling me to turn it off. Sis was trying to wipe the blood off Joe's face and Joe kept batting at her, crying, and then Anne Abbott was there, out of nowhere.

"Goddamnit, keep your hands off," Joe was yelling at Sis, and then Anne was saying, "Oh *Joe*. Joe, *Joe*!"

And I guess I knew, just from the way her voice was. She made him lie down on the grass and dropped down with her long legs tucked under her and took his head in her lap, not caring about the blood. Joe got very quiet. She kept talking to him with her voice like heavy cream, wiping gently at his forehead with a lace handkerchief. Her arm was around his thin little shoulders and under his head. He was still saying some of the words but Anne did not seem to mind and perhaps I should have taken that in, even in the heat of excitement.

"I'm not crying, Goddamnit," he said. "It just hurts like hell is all."

"I know, baby," Anne said. "Be quiet now. I know."

She made him stay that way awhile but he kept getting paler and once in a while his eyes closed and his head lolled back.

"We've got to get you to a doctor," she said finally. "Try to stand up." She put her arm under his shoulders and helped him hobble to the phaeton where she had left it in the middle of the street. His ankle was all swollen and he was bloody and she was almost carrying him. It occurred to me then, with that crazy logic that comes at such times, that she could never marry him because she was bigger than he was. She got him in the front seat and came around and asked me to take care of the motorbike.

"Sure, Anne," I said, "I'll take care of it."

"You're sweet," she said. "I appreciate it. You're a good boy."

I watched her get into the car; it was always a joy to see the way she slipped in fast and graceful, and to see the flash of her brown legs going in under the wheel.

And so I stood, after she drove off, with the beat-up motorbike and the kids, not feeling so good. I hated the motorbike and I felt a little sick and I guess I knew even then it wasn't the blood.

Then it was different again, and very painful. There wasn't any motorbike, and she and Joe would sit together over by the sidelines when everybody else played croquet. Sometimes she pulled her skirts up and tucked them around her, to let her legs brown, and sometimes Joe would put his bandaged head in that lap which seemed made for heads or for naked children. They stayed that way a long time, talking quietly, and every once in a while Anne would laugh. If I tried to get up close to them Joe would raise his head and stare at me.

"Get on back to the croquet balls," he said. "You bother me," always something like that. And Anne would say "Joe!" but you could tell she didn't mean it anymore.

"Go on," Joe would say, "you give me a pain where it aches."

And I would go away. There was a place I knew of, deep in some bushes, and I thought of it as The Place to Go at such times. It was behind the shrubbery in front of our house, and in there was a rat-trap I baited with cheese. It never caught any rats, but sometimes catbirds who flew down to get the cheese got caught. And I would sit and look at the dead, stiffening catbird, caught fast in the trap, trying to feel what being caught was like. Sometimes I could cry, and I think I knew my lament was for no bird.

But occasionally it was different; sometimes Anne would make Joe hush, and I could stay. And that was a bitter-sweet thing, being there like that and hearing what they said. They talked about all sorts of things, but mostly about painting or places or love.

"I want to go to the Prado," Anne said one day, "back to Florence too, of course, but Spain for a while."

"You don't really want to paint," Joe said. "You'll probably just marry some damn painter over there."

"No, I don't want to get married yet. Fall in love, maybe, yes. Have an affair. But I want to be free a while yet."

"That's good," Joe said. "That suits me just fine."

That was the way it was, more and more. I sat and stared at his bandage, hoping it would have to come off soon, and I did not know whether to hate it or be glad when Joe lifted his head while I was looking and said, "Will you clear *out* of here?" I hated the way he lifted his head and popped his eyes and said, "What the hell are you hanging around for?" There was no doubt about that.

They began going for rides in the phaeton too, Anne driving because Joe could not get a license until December. Standing out on the street I sometimes saw them go by. The top was always down, and Anne was sitting brown and tall behind the wheel with her hair blowing in the crisp, dry sunlight, with Joe slumped down on his side, his head laid back on the hot leather and his face pasty-white. Anne always waved at me and smiled and I waved back, though it was a hard thing for me to do. Perhaps I was not really resigned to seeing them always together. At any rate I did not have to stop to think the day Anne stopped and asked me if I would like to go with them.

"Whatd'ya want *him* for?" Joe said. "Good Jesus."

"Joe," she said, "you're rude," and the way she said it made me think they had been arguing. It was like the times she got mad at Bobo. "You *would* like to go, wouldn't you?" she said, smiling at me. She leaned forward so I could slip in behind her seat—this time it was the closed Ford, and not the phaeton. "I like to have you around," she said. "You're a nice guy." And it is a funny thing: I can still hear the sound of her voice, saying that, though now I understand it for what it was. Joe was still talking to me in that slow, acid way he had, but Anne made him shut up.

"Ah, what are you mad for?" he said. "Just because . . ."

"I'm not mad," she said. "Just shut up now."

We drove around for a while, with Anne talking to me over her shoulder, ignoring Joe. But she couldn't keep it up. By the time we got out into the Dulaney Valley she was talking to him again, too, if a little coolly.

I like to think there is a fine irony in the fact that it was in this valley I saw her the other day, and have always seen her in my mind's eye. But that day, as she drove along the back roads, I saw no ironies, and not much of the country. I kept my eyes on the floor of the car or on the back of Anne Abbott's head. I was hardly listening when Joe asked her to let him drive a while and she pulled over to the side of the road.

He liked to drive fast and he drove quite a while and he got her to laughing again. He could do that: he could be outrageous and then she laughed. In a way I think they almost forgot me. I just sat there, trying to get lower in the back seat, when Joe turned off onto the dirt road. It was a little road, and wound up a hill.

"What are you going up here for?" Anne said.

"You ought to know. Maybe just to look around."

Then the hill got steep and finally we came out on top, away from everything, and were in a wide open place where you could look back down over the valley. There were several other cars parked up there: one of them was empty and still, and in another a man and a woman were kissing. Then Joe started talking, and at first I did not believe it because he was talking the way he did with Reese.

"I know you're in there," he would say, looking at the empty car, "and I know what you're doing," and then he would laugh the way he did when he hit me.

"Right in broad daylight, too."

"Stop it, Joe," Anne said. "Quit it now."

"You think I don't know you're in there," Joe said, "but I do. And I know what you're doing."

"Joe!" Anne kept saying, but she was laughing too, even at the words that made Reese mad. I tried to look out the window and not hear, but I could not see anything, only the clean blue of the sky. I sank down as far as I could go in the back seat.

"Come on, Joe," Anne said, "quit it. Let's go." But he would not stop, saying all the words again. And then he said, "Come over here," in a voice that was different, and I could hear Anne saying no, but not meaning it, and I could hear him move on the seat. And then it got worse. It got quiet. And I knew they were kissing, and I could do nothing. There was an old match box cover on the floor that said "Koempel's Potato Chips" on it, and I put my foot on that and then put it on again, blotting out Mr. Koempel's damned chips.

"That's better," Joe said.

"You fool," Anne said, but she was really laughing. "Listen," she said. "Come on, this is all wrong."

That was when I looked at her face. I wish I had not done that. She was sitting half-turned in the seat and Joe's head was still close to hers and her cheeks were flushed and her lips were slightly parted. I guess I must have moved or done something, when I looked at her

that way and died, for she looked back at me quickly, and I wish I had not seen that face either. She didn't do anything for a minute and then her shoulders fell forward and her eyes closed, as though she had seen herself too.

"Get us out of here," she said then, "you fool." And I think he must have heard the difference in her voice too. He did not say anything, but simply started the car and turned and went back down the little rutted road. When they got to the highway she was staring straight ahead, and when she spoke to him her voice was dead too. "I'll drive," was all she said.

He stopped the car and she got out to go around. While she was moving around to the driver's side, he turned round to me and let me have it, his voice spitting all the words at me while he grinned. But she heard him. She grabbed his collar and shook him, harder than I thought she could.

"Damn you!" she cried. "Damn you, shut up! Right now!"

"It wasn't just *me*," Joe said. "I didn't . . ." But she shook him again, making him shut up, yelling at him "Shut up, shut up, shut *up!*" and then she was just standing with her fists clenched to her temples.

When her fists came down she stood there for a minute longer, framed in the sunlight of the window. Then she opened the door and put her knee on the seat and leaned over to me.

"Look," she said, "I was just being crazy, that's all. It was just a game."

I looked at her face just one time, so grave and gentle, and then I could not look anymore.

"I'm sorry," she said, her voice very still. She waited but I could not look, and she said, "Come on up here in the front seat with me." But I shook my head. She stood there for quite a while, and Joe did not say anything. Then she got in the car.

"Oh damn," she said, quietly.

"Don't blame *me*," Joe said. "What the hell," and she must have looked at him, because he shut up.

She did not say anything more. She put the car in gear and we drove off. Joe tried once or twice to get her to talk but she would not say a word and finally we drove in silence. There was only the steady sound of the motor and the wind in the trees, and I was glad of that. When she let me off at my house she did not try to say anything either. I climbed out and said thank you as well as I could and she said "Bye bye," very gravely. I did not look at her

but I looked at Joe and he was watching me, and his face had that funny, proud smirk on it.

And that was the last time I saw her until the other day. Oh, I saw her driving past in the phaeton a few times, her hair wisping lightly in the wind, but I did not let her see me so it was different. I seem to remember somebody telling me she married a lawyer in town, but I cannot say who it was, or when, and I may have made that up. It was fairly simple not to see her again because by that time it was the hot dry weather of August and right after that she went away, to Spain or to Italy again.

And I did not see Joe Stratton again, really, though he lived next door to us for another year, before we moved. He did not try to find me anymore, and if I saw him in the drugstore or around he only looked at me in a funny, new way and did not try to speak.

But what seems so strange to me is the way I see her, when I wake in dark times and think about her. I see her in that pink linen dress, staring across a field at some horses, with sun falling down over her shoulders and her wisping hair like yellow rain. It is what seems strange to *me,* at least, and perhaps, too, very important.

EDWIN FUSSELL:

A Necklace of Chromosomes

The woods are alive with ancestors like children
playing ambush, I have been this way before
but with other faces than the one I wear

to the pool which is only a magic mirror, look
how it changes to red, to warm, and it bubbles,
many an old one has drowned in it, never fear

the path is only magic, look how it shifts
to right, to left of that tree where the face is,
returning surprise for surprise, I can bear it.

JOHN BERRY:

Salaam

Mohammed Ilias Mirza said:
"I will supply you with eggs,
But no money must pass between us."
Fridays I was reading his palm.

Tonight is the Feast of Ramadan.
A moon as thin as
A barely possible razor
Appears over the waters.

We are thinking of each other
As much as you might wish,
Though I am uncircumcised, and he
Has eaten at least one cow.

Koan

(from the *Lankavatara Sutra*)

"If I am caged in my own heart tonight,
why then does beauty give me no delight?"

Bitternesses blow over the Prince,
changing his color, form and rumored game.

"My heart is filled with its own reasonings,
perfect, impenetrable. Thou canst not enter!"

"I will break thy heart."
As horribly as lifting the world;
eerily as a bee; painlessly
as the folding of a joint.

ARNOLD FISHMAN:

A Cock Cried

A cock cried somewhere deep in genesis.
Before a treetop a dunghill or a spire
He grasped the thought of chaos and he tossed
From night to nocturne in the shell of time.
The cock perceived that chaos could not bear
It had no parts no unity or womb
He willed to bring he poised upon his toes
His comb stood up his wattled throat inflamed
He strove to bear and brought forth cherico—
And cherico—the first flush flowered his face
A cock the sun and then the world arose.

LAURENCE DONOVAN:

Testament

Death's the fine solvent of this miracle star,
Upon the which I love my jack and johnny
For a space, and spend my spinnied penny
Beatific, by christ or cock, each hour:
By sigh or nay, my deary, wry's to bloom.

For such dark's beyond the redoubted gleam
I can but do what's holy to de done:
Here is the simple story under the sun,
My latest gesture in my only room;
By nay or sigh, o dreary, blooming's wry
(But I will bloom or may my day be done).

PATRICIA GOEDICKE:

Casper, Wyoming

Knock-kneed and wrinkled and not worn-out,
The old ones go to the top of the mountain
That hangs like a haunch above the town,
Slabbed and impassive, stolidly looking down.

Dog bones bleach on the wild red hillside,
Maggots crawl into the sockets to die,
But the old ones scurry like skeletons,
They take up their beds and dance and dance.

They buzz on the iron rump like bees
And bitterly they do as they please
Though the cat-crackers whine on the plain below,
The wind has a belly of gas.

Let it pass, they say, let pass
The city, the oil-slick, the civilized children
Who live by their parents' advice:
We are mad and immoral as mice.

GEORGE SCOUFFAS:

Kazantzakis: Odysseus and the 'Cage of Freedom'

Although its initial edition, published in Athens in 1938, numbered only three hundred copies, *The Odyssey* by Nikos Kazantzakis attracted immediate attention. As a literary work, it was declared a daring sequel to the Homeric epic in a genre usually thought unsuitable to modern taste. Thematically, it was taken as Kazantzakis' master statement of his view of modern man. In Greece itself it aroused fierce controversy, strong echoes of which still reverberate. The academicians attacked its form, its idiomatic styling, and what they considered its heterodoxy.

The poem did not come as a complete surprise. Before its publication, it was well known that Kazantzakis had been preoccupied with it since 1925. Moreover, by 1938 the direction of his thinking and the versatility of his genius were familiar; novels, prose and poetic dramas, travelogues, philosophic disquisitions, and even translations of such works as Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Goethe's *Faust* had anticipated *The Odyssey*. As also had the known facts of his life, private and public. For Kazantzakis' own experience in many ways prefigured the adventures of his picaresque hero. When he had completed his formal education, having taken the degree of law from the University of Athens, Kazantzakis became a chronic traveller, restlessly moving through Europe, Asia, and Africa, in the process learning five modern languages to add to his Latin and modern and ancient Greek. Yet he also felt the need for withdrawal and contemplation, at one time spending two ascetic years on Mount Athos. And he was willing to submit to public life when his country needed him, by taking on the duties of Director General of the Ministry of Public Welfare at the end of World War I. Later, after the appearance of *The Odyssey,* he was to become for a brief, stormy period Minister of National Education; and in 1947 he was Director of Translations from the Classics for UNESCO.

The English reading public knew little or nothing of Kazantzakis before 1953, when his novel *Zorba the Greek* was published in English.

The Greek Passion followed in 1954, and two years later came *Freedom or Death*. Although the last was considered disappointing, taken together the novels revealed a major talent and set the stage for the publication in 1958 of *The Odyssey,* translated into English verse by Kimon Friar. The American reader, accustomed to leanness and directness even in his more "symbolic" or esoteric reading, is likely to approach the poem with awe and resistance, for its sheer bulk alone is formidable. Once engaged, however, he will discover a remarkable range of knowledge and depth of insight controlled by a disciplined mind.

The poem consists of 33,333 lines, is opulent in style and lavish in its use of fable, dream, and digressive incident; yet, the main narrative action is relatively simple. Odysseus, having set Ithaca in order, leaves again with a small band of companions. His destination is Sparta, where his friend Menelaus and the beautiful Helen rule. Abducting Helen, who is obviously bored with her royal domestic life, he takes her to Crete, where he loses her to a "blond barbarian," member of the new Doric race. From here Odysseus goes to Egypt, engages in an unsuccessful revolt, then sets out to trace the Nile to its source. After crossing a wilderness, he builds a Holy City, which is destroyed soon after its inauguration. Now completely alone and aged by his experience, Odysseus travels southward through Africa. When he reaches the sea, he builds himself another boat and sails to the polar regions. There he meets his death. This sequence of adventure is paralleled by the spiritual growth of Odysseus, who recognizes seven stages in man's progess from bestiality to pure soul; hence one of his epithets: "seven-souled."

In his comprehensive introduction to *The Odyssey,* Friar states that the work, like Joyce's *Ulysses,* is "concerned with the modern man in search of a soul." He isolates the active agent in this search by quoting W. B. Stanford: "In fact, psychologically, [Kazantzakis'] epic is an exploration of the meaning of freedom." Since Kazantzakis brings to bear on his subject a lifetime of study in philosophy, anthropology, history, religion, and literature, the result is that the basic terms of the exploration become a catalogue of the central motifs and dilemmas of modern Western literature. For it is his purpose to expose Odysseus to all the strains and counter-strains that beset modern man, to guide him to a revelatory synthesis that can give him clarity of understanding and ultimate peace, and to do this without depriving him of his status as man. Whatever spiritual

heights Odysseus ascends, he is to remain deeply rooted in nature. He is to grow downward as he reaches upward.

To launch himself in his search, Odysseus must become the self-exile. The Ithaca he has found after twenty years' absence and delivered from its oppressors quickly palls, becomes confining. He feels the limitation of order, and against the advice of the elders, who believe in the sacredness of boundaries, he will "concede no boundaries." It is significant that Odysseus is out of place, "hung" between generations, for he sees in both his father, Laertes, and his son, Telemachus, a strong predisposition for discipline and order. He is the lost generation. At the death of Laertes, he is especially conscious of this:

> Watching his son before him run to find a bride,
> feeling his father's body rot in the grave behind him,
> and he at the dead center, bridegroom both and corpse,
> he shuddered, for his life now seemed the briefest lightning flash.

This feeling has its historical counterpart, for Odysseus sees himself at the end of the Homeric era. As a Cretan bard puts it, " 'Athena's helmet . . . has now been smashed to bits. . . .' " Typically Odysseus interprets his position in time as advantage: " 'Blessed be that hour that gave me birth between two eras!' " This historical position Kazantzakis exploits fully throughout the work, for wherever Odysseus goes on his travels—Sparta, Crete, Egypt—he finds decay and the seething of revolt. Although for Menelaus' sake he helps suppress the attempted overthrow of Sparta, he plays a leading role in the revolts against Crete and Egypt. The view expressed or demonstrated by Odysseus emphasizes the cyclical inevitability of cultural decline and death. Moreover, for him this is a "long" or infinite view that sees civilizations forever toppling and gods continually discredited.

Acutely sensitive to instability and change, Odysseus measures the validity of experience only in terms of flux. In a life that offers an infinitely multiple choice, man must maintain his freedom to choose. But since choice itself stops the flow, it becomes an agony and a confinement. Odysseus' reaction to this dilemma is essentially romantic, based on what may be called the "open end" concept. Choice is tentative in time and one must expose himself eternally to change if he is to fulfill his existence. When Odysseus declares, " 'If only the soul of man had myriad forms to serve it . . . ,' " he is expressing not only romantic insatiability but also the poignancy

of the dilemma itself. Nevertheless, he must pursue experience, he must make a cult of change, for to his temperament fixity of choice is death. Thus he is obsessed with and tortured by the multiplicity of "roads" open to him, and the "road" metaphor as an expression of the pursuit of freedom is dominant, especially in his earlier wanderings. Even the conservative Menelaus, when he is under the influence of Odysseus, dreams of freedom as a seeking of "all roads." It is, on one level, this open pursuit of experience that Odysseus is expressing when he says, "'My soul, your voyages have been your native land!'" For he seems to be most at ease with himself when he is saying farewell. Yet, caught in the eternal current, Odysseus remains very much aware of the paradoxical limits imposed on man by the infinity of choice. In one of his anguished moments, he sees earth as always "over-reaching" him, life always "cheating" him by "changing face so often my mind can't grasp it all."

Closely allied to this determined exposure to experience is the Odyssean dread of Paradise that is rooted in his strong sense of the relativity of time and in his earth-centeredness. This is a side of the hero that is implicit in the beginning lines of the poem: "Good is this earth, it suits us!" Earth is man's source and earth is the arena of his struggle. But since the earthly is imperfect and man is bedeviled by the dream of perfectibility and immortality, he is constantly trying to escape his origins. Odysseus expresses all stages of this dilemma through a recall of three of his Homeric adventures: his meetings with Calypso, Circe, and Nausicaa. The sexual union with Calypso transformed flesh into spirit. But this he recognized as a dangerous state, for it dehumanized him, left him "without man's springing heart." On the other hand, Circe, obviously representing the bestial in man, threatened his potential divinity. With Nausicaa, the ideal balance was apparently struck:

> 'She neither raised me to the empty sky nor hurled
> me down to Hades, but we walked on earth together. . . .'

However, this state also is untenable. More than that, it is the most treacherous of the three "temptations" ("'. . . most deadly forms which Death assumed . . .'"). Significantly, it is Nausicaa whom Odysseus chooses as the proper wife for his stay-at-home son, Telemachus, whose limited ambition to be a good king of Ithaca he scorns. For Odysseus' own vision of perfectibility, grounded in matter yet dynamically pursued by time and change, will never permit a utopian synthesis. Ironically, Odysseus himself is deceived into

illustrating this in the pivotal action that Books XIV through XVI describe. In Book XIV, in many ways the most moving of the entire work, Odysseus establishes his position in man's and nature's evolutionary scale. After seven days of reflection on a mountain top, for the first time he holds in suspension a universal view of creation with himself playing an integral role. His vision is remarkably like that of Whitman in its emphasis on the archetypal and representative *I*, the sense of the unbroken, upward continuity of creation, the mystical association with all creatures and plants accompanied by a deep feeling of love, all climaxed by the exhilaration of freedom. There is also an abiding satisfaction that comes with the belief that he is, to use Whitman's words, the "acme of things accomplish'd."

Odysseus systematically assesses his ancestral past, strains out its value to him, and then rejects it ("He felt himself at length freed from the snare of race"). He next turns to a consideration of all races and discovers a kinship with all men. Finally, he accepts all creation, "welcomes" all beasts, and through this acceptance he realizes that nature is his intimate ally, his "co-worker." By the end of Book XIV he has reached the stage of love, expressed in "wedding couplets" that again recall Whitman:

> 'Open all doors and windows now, break all the locks,
> O bride, receive the bridegroom, shepherd of all flocks!
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Today the sky and the day glow, with love, my Love,
> today in blazing light are wed the eagle and the dove!'

When Odysseus returns from the mountain with his new-found secret (the "palpable partridge warm and slain"), he is inspired to put his knowledge to action. The result is the enthusiastic planning and building of the Ideal City. Even during the inauguration ceremonies, however, there are evil omens, and soon after the city's completion it is destroyed by earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Odysseus' attitude throughout this ordeal makes it clear that he has been almost wilfully self-deceived in his hope for an Edenic creation. Though man's efforts are foredoomed, nevertheless he must build. At this stage of his development he fights necessity with action. This is not the typical mood or motivation of the teleological mind. During the early warnings of disaster, Odysseus rails at his "devouring god" like a Captain Ahab, asserts the importance of man's own drive toward creative order, and once again defies necessity.

What is most paradoxical in the entire episode is that it seems

to betray all that Odysseus to that point has represented. His presence everywhere has meant disruption: he is the destroyer of cities, the "god-slayer," the "soul-snatcher." Menelaus reacts with characteristic fear of Odysseus when he thinks:

> 'Fate has in him grown proud, the holy measure is smashed
> that balances the good and evil powers within us.'

For Odysseus moral absolutes are impossible; he feels too strongly the dualistic relativity demanded by experiential growth; like an existentialist he accepts the "moral" value of evil itself ("'Alas for him who seeks salvation in good only!'"). Although his cosmology does not permit an Edenic myth, his humanistic view of man implicitly supports the doctrine of the "fortunate fall" (*i.e.,* man is properly man only in his imperfection). In fact, as Friar interprets it, the destruction of the city is necessary to the completion of the spiritual development of Odysseus, for it is only through fall and betrayal that man grows. And, in a sense, man must provide his own betrayal, assert his own antitheses. Nowhere is this more explicitly and vehemently stated than during the Mosaic flight through the wilderness preceding the building of the city. When Odysseus surprises one of his followers attempting to plant a flower in the desert, he becomes enraged. The immediate reason is his fear of stability ("'. . . for then the heart takes root and never again will leave!'"). But this quickly leads to the expression of a doctrine of wholesale perversity: "'To all laws I'll erect contrary secret laws.'" Sometime later he defines this stand in terms of the necessity of suffering: "'To climb and hunger . . . ; this is my God's feast. . . .'"

The destruction of the city thus becomes on one level grist for Odysseus' spiritual mill. Indeed, the shock of the experience turns his hair completely white and sets the final stage of his exploration of freedom, the freedom from hope itself ("'Dear heart, you've flown beyond the final labor, Hope'"). From this point on, *The Odyssey* settles into an extended Wagnerian embellishment of the theme described by Stanford as the abandonment of the "cult of doing for the cult of being."

In its total effect, then, the building of the city operates as an illustrative exercise in tragic irony. And as such it serves as a means of clearing the hurdle of naturalistic determinism. From the beginning Odysseus is in the anomalous position of being victimized by necessity, yet, although constantly railing against it, being himself

its instrument. In this respect the new Odysseus is very much his Homeric self, for he is unmatched in his devious ability to survive, both physically and psychologically. He plunders his own stores to escape from Ithaca; he unhesitatingly betrays his good friend Menelaus when he abducts Helen, and this after he has by a ruse preserved Menelaus' kingdom against incipient revolt; he craftily plans the destruction of Crete; and when circumstances demand it, he kills without sentiment. He is feared as much for his treachery as for his boldness of thought and purpose. Odysseus' view of man as half-beast, half-god, as the battleground of antithetical forces, supports him in this role. Yet, in Book VIII, after the brutal Cretan revolt, when Odysseus begins to eat, he notices a huge locust settled on his bread and glaring at him "wrathfully with crystal eyes." For the first time he knows fear, and in revulsion he surrenders his bread to the locust.

In Book XIV Odysseus works out a complex dialectical and psychological escape from the naturalistic trap. The key to the basic method, as given him by Mother-Earth, is an identification with earth-bound creation, an unreserved affirmation of the primordial and instinctual. To accomplish this, mind, source of abstract concept, must be forced into abeyance to permit the life-stream, represented by heart, to run free. This does not mean the total rejection of reason. Odysseus never loses his respect for it. One of his epithets is "Archer of the Mind," and a full study may be made of the many references to and images involving the mind that occur throughout the poem. A significant level of tension dramatizes the eternal conflict between mind and feeling, reason and intuition, and man's need to reconcile the two. In this preoccupation, also, Kazantzakis is exploring an urgent modern problem, the "dissociation of sensibility." At this particular stage in his growth, Odysseus is in effect testing out a possible resolution of this conflict by subjecting reason to instinct. He hopes that when he blows the "murky brain away," the "dark inhuman powers may change to God." This "grounding" of high-flying reason is expressed in a sexual metaphor:

> 'The time has come to stretch blue-eyed Idea down
> on earth like a chaste bride and fill her full of seed!'

Thus the city, product of this act, becomes both a memorial to his apparent success in the resolution of the conflict, and a sacrifice to its failure.

The ulterior motives behind Odysseus' affirming of instinctual nature may perhaps be best explained by the principle of purgation.

Odysseus is using this means to free himself from the limitations of nature. Hence his ecstatic joy when he feels that ". . . he'd become all earth from his loins down," or when ". . . he shot his deadly arrows happily everywhere/ till his hands filled with pulsing forms, with bloodstained wings," is in the nature of exorcism, about which more will be said later. Through his participation in nature's atavistic struggle he rises above it. The working of this principle is illustrated in his inner dialogue with his God. When Odysseus asks his God, "'What hunter so pursues you that you gasp and groan?'" the answer is:

> 'I climb my own dark body, Son, to keep from stifling.
> Trees and beasts smother me, and your flesh chokes me, too;
> I fight to flee you, not even your soul can hold me now.'

During the actual building of the city Odysseus' motivation becomes even clearer. In a sermon to his workers, he describes the naturalistic immanence of his new-found God. Soon after, he organizes the citizens into distinct classes of workers, soldiers, and intellectuals, and establishes a communal society: no private property, no marriage or family unit, compulsory death for the old. And one day he is inspired by the fierce, destructive mating of a colony of termites to the announcement of the city's fundamental law:

> 'Whatever blind Worm-Mother Earth does with no brains
> we should accept as just. . . .'

Here is the acceptance of determinism. Yet, when Odysseus chisels on stone his ten commandments, the final one reasserts the search for freedom as the " 'greatest virtue on earth.' " And thus the destruction of the city through the working of the very law on which it was founded itself becomes a crucial stage in the search. Odysseus now breaks clear of naturalistic necessity and participation. This freedom is anticipated just before the inauguration of the city, when his bow crumbles and he renounces his role as hunter. And it is summarized after the destruction as a salvation from the needs of "castle" and "tent," hunger and thirst.

Bereft of all companions and thwarted in his supreme effort to objectify love in a stable form, Odysseus now goes through the change that prepares him for the only companionship left him, that of death. In this final stage Friar describes him as concerning himself "more and more with the outer world," and he points up the basic contradiction in the means Odysseus uses to arrive at his ultimate understanding of life and his relation to it by stating that

"It is when he turns ascetic that Odysseus becomes most materialistic." *The Odyssey* from Book XVI to the end, however, actually "documents" the stratagems which the romantic sensibility employs to circumvent its dilemmas.

From the beginning, Odysseus has stressed the demands and needs of the self. Typically romantic is the fascination with the prospects of the limitless potentiality of the individual ego and the urge to explore this potential without reservation at whatever cost. In other words, the travels of Odysseus are an interior voyage, and the subjective level of his adventures is made unmistakably explicit by Kazantzakis. This is such a prominent feature of *The Odyssey* that a most fruitful study may be made of its "interior landscapes." The sea speaks of itself as an "inner sea" and the sun, matrix of symbol and metaphor in the book, describes itself as "Sun of an inner sky and sea, peak of an inner world." When Odysseus reaches the Nile, he characteristically internalizes it, chiding his companions for not seeing its true significance: "'Blockheads, you see but river! It never swipes your brain/ our soul's the river. . . .'"

So that the self may remain free to fulfill itself, Odysseus maintains a policy of non-commitment. Very early in the work, he reveals this stand to his father: "'. . . my warp is No, my woof is Yes,/and what I weave all day I swift unweave by night.'" This is an ironic play on the trick Penelope played to hold off her suitors, ironic because it is precisely this side of Odysseus that she now fears. The theme of non-commitment is constant throughout: Odysseus, just before his death, passes between the twin peaks of Yes and No. Moreover, it operates on all levels. In a dream Odysseus is accused by a General of refusing to take sides during a battle (is called the "left-right-handed man") and is ordered to serve both armies. That there are political connotations here is clear. There is esthetic non-commitment in his reaction against the effete Pharaoh who believes in the immortality and absoluteness of Art. And humanistic non-commitment in the paradoxical side of Odysseus "'that loves all things on the bright earth yet sticks to none.'"

Inevitably the worship of self leads to the negation of all external authority (cf. Odysseus as "god-slayer"). When he is still in Ithaca, Odysseus makes a point of drinking to "man's dauntless mind" instead of to the gods. Orpheus, the piper, early sings of man's constant outwitting of his God, who is pictured as an arrogant and jealous murderer. And later, when Odysseus fashions a god out of

a log to deceive the African natives, he refers to "'God as good merchandise . . . sales without end.'" The total discrediting of external divinity is expressed by him when he asserts that "'. . . God is clay in my ten fingers, and I mold him.'" Simultaneously he identifies God with earth-bound man, as has already been discussed. The ten commandments for the city are founded on this identification.

With the destruction of the city begins the final stage in Odysseus' assumption of divine authority—the apotheosis of the ego. Odysseus, "desolate, lone, without a god," sinks into the "terror of thought" and emerges with a new identity, the fulfillment of a wish he had even as a child ("'O God, make me a god!'"). This experience is dramatized in a demonic rite of self-communion, in which he bends and bites his heel and ecstatically declares:

> 'I'm both the brain-begotten god and the anti-god,
> I'm the warm womb that gives me birth, the grave that eats me!
> The circle is now complete, the snake has bit its tail.'

Thus is the psychological circuit closed and all antinomies resolved. Although there are mystical implications in this ultimate state, there is an important difference from the Buddhistic mysticism which at one time strongly attracted Kazantzakis. The most obvious result of mysticism is the utter abasement of self, but antithetic to this is self-enlargement—out of nothingness, the great *I*. Odysseus' ascetic enlightenment leads to this latter victory of self. In a sense, he has fought his own Armageddon and has emerged the victor over the opposing powers. He is presumably freed from time, from the confining pressures of moral, esthetic, and philosophic absolutes, and from the need of salvation, for he is now "'the savior, saved from his salvation. . . .'"

Henceforth the "world-creator" (his new epithet) with "self-lighted head," Odysseus now juggles reality to suit his whim. Inevitably, however, he must also be the destroyer, for his hierarchy of self has been founded on a systematic annihilation of nature, including his own material existence. Creation, "sucked down in the great ascetic's gyre," is "swallowed all" in his "black wells." In a passage that describes his joy in his epiphany this necessary annihilation is described as a "dislodgement" of creation. And, again, in lines that aptly express Kazantzakis' thematic method throughout and perhaps reveal his relation to his art:

> . . . his hands rejoiced in fondling all the upper world
> and yet his mind rejoiced to scatter it far and wide.

Transferred to the psychological level this impulse strips away the self: "'I am the savior, and no salvation on earth exists!'" Thus is God likewise destroyed and supplanted by the dynamic urge toward freedom: "'. . . by God is meant to hunt God through the empty air!'"

In his new role Odysseus freely indulges himself, but since, as he well knows, reality still involves necessity and the pressure of time, he takes refuge in irony. Indeed, it is only through irony that he can hold his high ground of detachment and maintain the suspension of contraries. Irony also prevents his becoming victimized by his self-created illusion, for the contraries still exist and are potent. Thus it is ironic insight that prompts Odysseus to laugh down the inner Tempter who tries to flatter him into believing he has reached the finality of truth.

But irony can be dangerous and fickle. Properly used it operates as a catalyst, and as such it frees and illuminates. When it assumes an intrinsic value, it can destroy. It can dehumanize, enervate, and annihilate. Or it can become simply a stance, a superficial imposition on experience that hampers meaning. Or, being what it is, it can turn on itself. The shrewdness of Odysseus makes him sensitive to most of these dangers. In a dream-fable which re-plays his own changes, a young king in search of meaning arrives at the secret that the "'mind's a lamp with little oil,'" breaks out into apparently releasing ironic laughter, only to be caught short by the smell of death. This forces him back to a re-affirmation of material reality. In another dream Odysseus kills a deer, re-asserts the naturalistic doctrine ("'A great and mighty tiger rules the living world'"), awakens to fashion a new bow, and so re-enters nature as a participant.* Still another time he berates a lord who defines his freedom in terms of ironic self-indulgence, who stripped off "the veil from life," saw her nude, then tasted "all things indifferently with mocking skill." Finally, Odysseus is appalled at the supreme irony of having himself deified and worshipped by others, for this he recognizes as enslavement for all concerned.

This final irony, however, suggests a disturbing area of blindness in Odysseus which is inherent in the basic theme of *The Odyssey*. Although Odysseus sees in his own deification by others all that he

* This re-entrance is important, also, because it partially saves the irony in *The Odyssey* from the self-conscious pose of "ironic laughter." Too often the reader is reminded of the "laughter of the gods" that the latter-day Romantic, Lord Dunsany, was addicted to.

has from the beginning struggled to escape (man's chronic surrender to form and ritual), Kazantzakis himself describes him in his final state as having been "drained pure till life turned to immaculate myth." The key word is *immaculate.* Most obviously it refers to the ultimate stage of man's seven-stepped spiritual evolution. A brief summary of Kazantzakis' views on the relation between experience and art, however, will reveal other implications. In *Zorba the Greek,* which of the translated novels is closest in thematic details to *The Odyssey* and is thus very helpful in illuminating the latter work, the narrator's many statements on life and art may be considered Kazantzakis' own. Taken together they define art as exorcism. As such, "Art is, in fact, a magic incantation" that purges man of "obscure homicidal forces" and "deadly impulses," which are "cast out by the all-powerful exorcism of the word." The narrator thus uses his writing to overcome and drive out the influence of Buddha ("I must throw over him the net of images, catch him and free myself"). He even goes so far as to attempt a "writing-out" of the temptation of "a woman's body soaked by the rain." On the level of experience this process is necessary for the freeing of self from the bonds of materiality. One devours life to cleanse himself of it. This is especially evident when the narrator says that the "belly is the firm foundation . . . it is only with bread, wine and meat that one can create God." On re-reading Mallarmé, he is repulsed because he believes that his poetry did not begin with these essentials. That is, it was not the product of a systematic process of exorcism. Then he summarizes what he considers the proper relation of art and experience:

> The human element is brutish, uncouth, impure—it is composed of love, the flesh, and a cry of distress. Let it be sublimated into an abstract idea . . . let it be rarefied and evaporate.

It is this sublimation that Odysseus has achieved:

> The archer has fooled you, Death, he's squandered all your goods,
> melted down all the rusts and rots of his foul flesh
> till they escaped you in pure spirit . . .

Yet when Odysseus, as "immaculate myth," cannot subscribe to Christianity because only "'That man is free who strives on earth with not one hope'"; or when, in response to a request for his "wisest word," he says, "'I've gone beyond the Word . . . and fling you, for profound reply, a wordless smile,'" he is driving myth not toward but out of meaning. Like Coleridge the romantic may

awake to find his dream a reality. The result can be and has been great art. Driving reality into dream-annihilation, however, is another matter. And herein lies a level of irony to which Odysseus seems insensitive.

It is not that Kazantzakis has dared too much in his complete exploration of the meaning of freedom, but that, in a sense, he has exposed the subject beyond most profitable return in terms of meaning. Odysseus insists so obsessively on freedom that it becomes cleansed of definition. His spiritual progression certainly provides a significant model for man's possible development in an Einsteinian universe, and it does function effectively as the inner structure of *The Odyssey,* but its meaning is hampered by the context in which it operates. For example, the fundamental fact and experience of death dominates the poem from beginning to end; but despite Odysseus' elaborate preparations for his own death in the concluding books—described with grandeur and a passionate sense of loss—there is finally little offered toward the illumination of the experience beyond its incontrovertible necessity. As a matter of fact, Odysseus' ultimate annihilation of reality—including both its generative contraries and its illusions—makes death something gratuitous. One recalls that Kazantzakis is faced by a similar dilemma in *Freedom or Death,* where Captain Michales, driven by a "pure" sense of pride, in effect forces his foes to kill him, because for him freedom is finally synonymous with death. In the experience of life itself, as in the art that renders it, freedom like all else must have its measurement. It cannot simply be asserted as an absolute. And this suggests the greatest irony of all in *The Odyssey.* Friar, in his Synopsis of the work, touches on it when he describes Odysseus' death as freeing his mind from its "last cage, that of its freedom." Odysseus has been imprisoned in an abstraction and a category.

But this, too, should be a part of the story of modern man's quest and perhaps Kazantzakis has been truer to his subject than at first seems apparent. If so, his irony has still another layer, subtler and more devastating, which makes of *The Odyssey* a dramatization of the effects of a modern brand of *hubris* generated by man's being forced to make of himself the absolute measurement of his life and experience and destiny. Then, the final utterance of Odysseus, with its Tennysonian heroics, becomes almost unbearably poignant: "'Forward, my lads, sail on, for Death's breeze blows in a fair wind!'"

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